Author’s response to reviews

Title: Child sexual abuse in southern Brazil and associated factors: a population-based study

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Child sexual abuse in southern Brazil and associated factors: a population-based study
Diego G Bassani, Lilian S Palazzo, Jorge U Beria, Luciana P Gigante, Andreia CL Figueiredo, Denise RGC Aerts and Beatriz CW Raymann
BMC Public Health
Dear Nina Titmus
Assistant Editor
BMC-series Journals

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to clarify a few points with regards to our manuscript. See below your questions followed by our comments. If you require any further clarification please do not hesitate in contacting me.

- Please could you clarify whether the consent was sought from the adolescents or from their parents?

Authors’ response: Indeed it was not clear whether the participants or their parents signed the consent. This information is provided in the last paragraph of the Methods section: “The Ethics Committee of the Brazilian Lutheran University approved this project and informed consent was obtained from each subject prior to the interviews.” All participants signed an informed consent themselves, not their parents, regardless of age (14+). This sentence has been re-written to clarify the procedures that were adopted and now reads as: “The Ethics Committee of the Brazilian Lutheran University approved this project and all
respondents signed an informed consent prior to the interviews.”

- The data in your manuscript seems to be taken from the same study as that reported in PMID: 18709239 (Physical violence and associated factors: a population-based study in Southern Brazil; Rev Saude Publica, 2008 Aug;42(4):622-9), which has not been cited. Please could you comment on the differences or overlap between the two studies, and why the other report has not been discussed in this ms?

Authors’ response: Both manuscripts are based on studies that were nested in a larger study that had the primary objective of measuring hearing impairment in this population. We have referred to the original study in the first paragraph of the methods section: Beria JU, Raymann BC, Gigante LP, Figueiredo AC, Jotz G, Roithman R, Selaimen da Costa S, Garcez V, Scherer C, Smith A: Hearing impairment and socioeconomic factors: a population-based survey of an urban locality in southern Brazil. Rev Panam Salud Publica 2007, 21:381-387. Both papers (i.e. “Child sexual abuse in southern Brazil and associated factors: a population-based study” and “Physical violence and associated factors: a population-based study in Southern Brazil”) were being prepared and submitted for reviews concurrently and we did not cite the mentioned paper because it had not been published by the time this paper was being finalized. Were appropriate specifically when we discuss the association of child sexual abuse with physical violence – we have now included references to our Physical Violence study.

In regards to overlap and differences between the two studies: our present analysis focuses on child sexual abuse (between ages 0 and 18) in opposition to lifetime physical violence (not sexual) in our previous paper. The factors explored in the present paper are also different from those studied in our Physical Violence study but we explore the association of physical violence with child sexual abuse. We believe the gaps in the knowledge about child sexual abuse require a careful and focused analysis and also benefit from the visibility and open access that is provided by the BMC journals.

- Please could you also revise the background of your abstract to include more context information and aims.

Authors’ response: We have modified the Background section of our abstract, it now reads as: “The prevalence of child sexual abuse in the population has been poorly described in developing countries. The negative consequences – physical and emotional - of childhood sexual abuse are broad and pervasive, including increased risk factor of developing psychiatric disorders. Population data on child sexual abuse in Brazil is very limited. This paper aims to fill the significant gap in the Brazilian knowledge about lifetime prevalence of child sexual abuse. Using a cross-sectional survey design, this is the first study to describe the lifetime prevalence of child sexual abuse and associated factors in a Brazilian population-based sample.”

Best wishes,
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