Author's response to reviews

Title: Prevalence of risk factors for non-communicable diseases in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam: results from a STEPS survey

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Author's response to reviews: see over
17 July 2009

Dr. Melissa Norton
Editor-in-Chief
BMC Public Health

Dear Dr Norton,

Re: Submission of revised manuscript 1612781332645693

Thank you for your consideration of our manuscript entitled “Prevalence of risk factors for non-communicable diseases in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam: results from a STEPS survey”.

We found the referee comments to be very helpful and have revised the manuscript accordingly. I hereby submit the revised manuscript for consideration for publication in the

BMC Public Health.

The corresponding author for this manuscript will be Dr. Au Bich Thuy, Tel: 61 3 6226 4716, Fax: 61 3 6226 7755, E-mail: bau@utas.edu.au. We hope that you find this revised manuscript to be suitable for publication.

Yours sincerely

Au Bich Thuy
Point-by-point responses to referees’ comments:

<table>
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<th>Reference</th>
<th>Referee comment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Referee 2</td>
<td>The referee stated that “the authors may wish to reconsider their description and discussion of the SBP results in table 4”</td>
<td>We have replaced the following paragraph on page 9 of the Results:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Table 4 shows the estimates of pathophysiological risk factors in the four age groups sampled. More strongly for men than for women, mean levels of BMI (p &lt; 0.001), and – adjusted for BMI – means levels of SBP (p = 0.036), BG (p = 0.137) and TC (p &lt; 0.001) increased with age. Adjusted also for the behavioural risk factors (smoking, alcohol, fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity), the difference in trends remained stronger for women (SBP p = 0.031, BG, p= 0.009, TC p = 0.014). With this paragraph: Table 4 shows the estimates of pathophysiological risk factors in the four age groups sampled. More strongly for men than for women, mean levels of BMI (p &lt; 0.001), and – adjusted for BMI – means levels of BG (p = 0.137) and TC (p &lt; 0.001) increased with age. <strong>Mean levels of SBP adjusted for BMI also increased more strongly (p = 0.036) for women than for men, but from a lower level and did not overtake mean SBP of men even among 55-64 year olds.</strong> Adjusted also for the behavioural risk factors (smoking, alcohol, fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity), the difference in trends remained stronger for women (SBP p = 0.031, BG, p= 0.009, TC p = 0.014).</td>
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<td>Associate editor</td>
<td>The Associate Editor asked for modifications to the aim of the manuscript.</td>
<td>We were unclear about what modification was requested. Investigation of associations between risk factors was raised as an issue by the referees and this issue may also be the concern of the Associate Editor. Accordingly, we have modified the last paragraph of the Introduction by replacing the following sentences: This study aimed to describe the prevalence of risk factors for NCD in a rural...</td>
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</table>
This study aimed to describe the prevalence of risk factors for NCD in a rural Vietnamese sample from the Mekong Delta using standardised survey methodology developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) - the STEPwise approach to surveillance of non-communicable diseases (STEPS) [13]. In addition we compare estimates for men and women in this sample, and our results to those of previous surveys conducted in the two big cities and investigate possible explanations for the differences found.

Point 2  The Associate Editor suggested a modification for the title of table 4.

We agree and have modified the title of the table.