Author’s response to reviews

Title: Prevalence and sociodemographic correlates of stunting, underweight, and overweight among Palestinian school adolescents (13-15 years) in two major governorates in the West Bank

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear editor:

We would like to thank the reviewers for their valuable comments on our manuscript. We are pleased to re-submit a revised manuscript based on their comments. We also corrected one typing error on page 4; the area of the West Bank is 5655 and not 5690. We also updated the affiliation of one of our authors “A wartani, F” both on the title page and on the authors information on the submission page.

Please see below

Authors

Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence and sociodemographic correlates of stunting, underweight, and overweight among Palestinian school adolescents (13-15 years) in two major governorates in the West Bank

Version: 5 Date: 27 October 2009

Reviewer: Bernard Maire

Reviewer's report:

Dear Editors,

I believe that the authors have answered appropriately to previous comments. The aim, strength and limitations of the article are now clear enough, and the different parts have been significantly improved.

There is a 'Minor essential revision' : in the 'Measures' section, under the header 'anthropometric measures ' the authors state that BMI was categorized using the US NCHS/WHO 2000 growth charts and they refer to Kuczmarski et al. (ref. n° 18). As a matter of fact, this refers to a re-working of the old NCHS/WHO 1977 reference growth curve, but should be better called 'CDC 2000 reference'; WHO on another side has reconstructed on its own the same 1977 reference curve to produce a BMI-for-age reference for children and adolescents, but it has some distinct features and the article to cite then would be different (de Onis M, Onyango AW, Borghi E, Siyam A, Nishida C, Siekmann J. Development of a WHO growth reference for school-aged children and adolescents. Bull WHO 2007;85:660-667.).

I would suggest then the use of '2000 CDC reference' instead of 'NCHS/WHO reference' everywhere it appears in text or table footnotes.

Response: We have changed “NCHS/WHO reference” to “2000 CDC reference” in the text, in the tables and in the table footnotes.
Also I would suggest to use the word 'thinness' instead of 'underweight' for a low BMI-for-age, as recommended by WHO, as underweight is used for preschool children when speaking about low weight-for-age and it may be misleading for readers.

Response: We agree with the reviewer that “thinness” was proposed by both by the WHO and by IOTF to denote low BMI-for-age, however; because we used the 2000 CDC reference and this reference used the term “underweight” to define low BMI for age and because all the articles (please see references number 16, 27 and 29) that we have used in our discussion for comparison with our results have used the term “underweight” to denote low BMI for age, we think that it is better to keep the term “underweight” as is in our manuscript to avoid confusion. We also mentioned in our methodology section how we defined underweight.