Author's response to reviews

Title: Dental caries prevalence, oral health knowledge and practice among indigenous Chepang school children of Nepal.

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

Kindly find below the changes I have made as advised by the reviewers.

Reviewer 2: Morenike Folayan

- Result: Sentences starts with figures. This is wrong: you start sentences with words not figures eg 40% children reported to clean teeth for keeping them clean and 25% children to make teeth and gums strong. This kind of sentences is prevalent in the article especially in the result section.
  
  **Response:** Corrections are made as advised and all sentences in the result section start with words.

- The result section says the study population is 361 children age 6 to 14 years. The abstract reads that the 361 children are from Grade 1 to 5. The methodology says 361 children are 5 to 16 years recruited for clinical examination - It will be important to clarify the age of the children examined for the study.
  
  **Response:** The age of the children in the abstract and the methodology section has been corrected to 5-16 years old.

- There are six tables in the article BUT I see no reference to any of the tables in the result section.
  
  **Response:** Tables 1-5 are referenced in the result section.

- Last statement in paragraph one – please can you provide a reference for that statement?
  
  **Response:** The statement has been removed

- There are significant findings that show up in the table that is not reported in the result section eg in Table 2- the difference in deft and DMFT (is this significant), the increasing DMFT with age etc
  
  **Response:** The significant finding has been reported in the result section as an increasing trend in DMFT is seen with increase in age (Table 2).

- Table 3 - authors to report all percentages as one decimal space same as for Table 4-6. The labeling of all the tables should also be more explicit. They are currently inexplicit
  
  **Response:** The decimal point has been adjusted and tables are made more explicit.

- Table 4-6 should also reflect age related responses. Please include age in the table 4-6
  
  **Response:** Table 6 is removed as advised. Children enrolled in grade 3 and above were 11-16. The maximum number of children were age 11-12yrs and 15-16 were very less. It is therefore difficult to reflect age related responses.
• The questions in the table 6: I am not sure how those questions actually address attitude. They are not appropriate questions for exploring attitude. For a study like this, it would be more appropriate to use standardised measuring tools or adapt what has existed. It is more valid to adapt existing tools than creating new tools that are not validated to measure what they ought to measure
  
  Response: Table 6 has been removed as advised.

• The study also has its limitation. It cannot be said that the schools selected are truly representative of Chepang. This was a convenient sample. It is important for the authors to identify this limitation. The sample size is also very small. Also, the sample is exclusive to public school children and excludes children from private schools. The generalizability of the study result is therefore, limited.
  
  Response: There are no private schools in Chepang communities. The conclusion and discussion section reads: Although the present study is not a representative sample of public school children in Nepal and uses convenient sampling; it gives an insight into the caries prevalence, oral health knowledge and preventive practice in rural public schools.

• I have a challenge with the tools used to assess attitude. The tool does not truly measure attitude. if the authors can expunge this section from the paper, then it would be okay to handle the rest.
  
  Response: The section has been removed.

• The authors should also please work on the English. The discussion should be limited to significant findings and what is important. The length needs to be reduced
  
  Response: Language has been revised. Length is reduced and discussion is limited to significant findings.

I hope the changes made as advised is to the satisfaction of the reviewer and look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Lonim.