Reviewer's report

Title: Longitudinal study of habits leading to malocclusion development in childhood

Version: 1 Date: 24 February 2014

Reviewer: Jenny Abanto

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MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

ABSTRACT:
- “The increased prevalence of dental occlusion changes... Please change to “The increased prevalence of malocclusions represents...”
- Indicate the number of calibrated examiners and kappa values obtained for malocclusions.
- It is necessary to perform regression analysis to establish stronger conclusions.

INTRODUCTION:
- “The increased prevalence of dental occlusion changes... Please change to “The increased prevalence of malocclusions represents...”
- The authors need to emphasize the main relevance and difference of this study from others in literature.

METHODS:
- Please describe sample size calculation. It is a convenience sample, however it is necessary to prove that this sample was enough to establish the associations.
- Mothers receive orientation for oral health and about deleterious habits during pregnancy or after childbirth?
- Mention the reference for the validated questionnaire applied to mothers.
- There is a previous study establishing that more than two hours a day can be considered as habit? How the authors adopt this time?
- The authors do not considered exclusive breastfeeding (6 months after childbirth) for the associations??
- How the examiner was trained and calibrated? Describe the examiner characteristics.
- Mention the reference used by the WHO criteria in the text.
- Make the explanation concerning overbite criteria clearer. The authors considered as overbite a minimum space of 1mm between both incisal edges??
- Thirty months after childbirth... This time seems not enough to identify a malocclusion. Moreover, we cannot assure a clinical relevance of the
malocclusion at this age if we considered that malocclusions could have a physiological resolution if the deleterious habit is interrupted until 4 years old.
- It seems convenient to perform a regression analysis to find stronger associations between variables without considering confounding factors.

DISCUSSION:
- There are not references for many sentences in the text. For example: “Almost all studies observe a habit prevalence of less than 100%”.
- There are not other longitudinal studies to make comparisons?
- Do not show p-values in the discussion, these values correspond to the results section.
- Please mention the clinical relevance to the study, if we considered that malocclusions could have a physiological resolution if the deleterious habit is interrupted until 4 years old.
- Please mention stronger hypothesis for the association between bottle feeding and posterior cross-bite.
- Mention the limitations of the study concerning the assessment of exclusive breastfeeding, bias from mother’s reports and descriptive analysis

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I DECLARE NO CONFLICT INTERESTS