Author's response to reviews

Title: Comparing health-related quality of life of employed women and housewives: a cross sectional study from southeast Iran

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

MS: 1342081064627085
Comparing health-related quality of life of employed women and housewives: a cross sectional study from southeast Iran

Thank you for forwarding the reviewers’ comment to us. Please find the following point-by-point responses as requested.

Reviewer: Dr. Pawel Zagozdzon
The authors resubmitted their paper on Quality of Life in housewives and employed women in southeast Iran. This manuscript has significantly improved after revision. The results are now discussed in the context of used methodology.
A few further suggestions:
1. Results.
Table 1: The income should be presented as value calculated per household not per women.
Done.
Table 2: The comparison of QoL would be more informative if the results from both univariate and multivariate model would be presented.
A column was added to include the results from univariate analysis.
The authors should add missing figures in the sentence form section Sample characteristics: “The women’s mean income was …..”. However the remark concerning income calculated per family refers to this as well.
Done.
2. Discussion
The grammar of the text from section Limitations should be corrected i.e. the following sentences: “This might be introduced a bias and should be noted in interpreting the results. Finally, social, economic and environmental issues may be influenced the results for which we were unable to control for.
This section was revised as suggested:
This study had some limitations. Firstly it was a cross sectional study and thus making the findings limited. Secondly, there were some confounders for which we did not collect data. For instance we did not collect information on psychological status of the women at the time of completing the questionnaire. Finally, for illiterate women we did collect the data by interviews while for others we used the self-completion method. Thus the results might be influenced by difference in data collection.
3. Conclusion
I suggest to rephrase conclusion by adding “After controlling for potential confounders” to first sentence “The findings from this study indicated that were no significant differences in quality of life between employed women and housewives”.
The first sentence of Conclusion was rephrased as suggested:
After controlling for potential confounders the findings from this study indicated that there were no significant differences in quality of life between employed women and housewives.

Reviewer: Dr. Maryam Tajvar
I have re-reviewed the revised manuscript, submitted by the authors in response to our original comments. I would generally state that the authors have had great efforts to improve the quality of the manuscript and response to the questions. I believe that the manuscript would be good enough for publication after doing some further amendments (mainly in the DISCUSSION section of the paper) and addressing some more issues as listed below:

Although I believe that the authors can be trusted to make these amendments, I would consider the following list as “Major Compulsory Revisions” because of their importance:

Dear authors:
You had three main sets of findings summarised at the beginning of the DISCUSSION section: 1) no statistically significant difference between the quality of life of the groups; 2) poorer physical functioning status among employed group; 3) main difference in mental health aspect rather than physical health aspect between the groups.

1) Regarding the first item, I believe that you have tried to ignore the non-significant differences and tended to overemphasis on the differences. I think alongside what you have already discussed, you could also discuss on why and how non workers and workers have had rather similar health status like the interesting discussion of your Ref No 19 in the second paragraph of Discussion section. Thus, please discuss more on the reasons for non-significant differences between the groups. For example, the rather low power of your study (small sample size) could be one justification. Work-related stresses, etc… could be another justification.

The following sentences were added to the Discussion as recommended:
However, there might be other reasons for non-significant differences in quality of life between employed women and housewives. For example, the rather low power of the current study (small sample size) could be one reason for such findings.

2) With regard to the second item, although again statistically non significant, please discuss why housewives had higher physical functioning scores compared to the employed women, despite other domains.

The following sentences were added to the Discussion as suggested:
Interestingly the housewives reported better physical functioning compared to the employed women. It is argued that one reason for low physical functioning among employed women might be due to work-related stress that in turn even could predict sick-leave among employed women [15].

3) Also, regarding the third item, please discuss why comparatively the differences were more related to psychological health aspect rather than physical health aspect.

We feel we provided enough Discussion on this where we refer to ref. 17, ref. 18, ref. 19 and ref. 20. Thus, we did not add any more discussion on this to avoid repetition.
4) In the second paragraph of Discussion, you have mentioned that your findings were consistent with the results of similar studies conducted in Iran [16-18]. Please add one paragraph to summarise the findings of Refs 16-18 and compare them with your own findings.

Since we felt two references were irrelevant, in first instance we removed these references and secondly the paragraph was reorganized to comply with the recommendation:

The findings from our study were consistent with the results of similar studies conducted in Iran [12,16,17]. For example, a recent study of 710 working mothers and 350 non-working women from Iran on the impact of employment on mothers' health status found that after adjustment for three main explanatory factors (socio-demographic, work and work-related, and social-life context variables) there were no statistically significant differences between working and non-working women in a range of mental and physical health outcome variables. The authors concluded that this might be a result of the counter-balance of the positive and negative factors associated with paid work such as increased stress on one hand and self-esteem on the other [17]. However, the comparison of quality of life scores between our study population and a sample of Iranian female population showed that the mean score for different quality of life domains in our sample was lower than that of those for the Iranian women population except for physical functioning and mental health [13].

Apart from the above comments please once more check carefully for the spelling errors of the manuscripts. Also the manuscript still needs to be edited grammatically and for English. Formatting of the references also needs to be unified and edited.

Thank you. Done.

Editorial Comments:

You have addressed many of the issues raised by the reviewers. However, it is important to address point-by-point the remaining concerns. Please work especially hard on improving your English writing.

Thank you. We have tried to respond point-by-point to the reviewer’s remaining concerns and checked the English once more. In addition we would like to indicate that the Edanz initially checked the paper.

I hope you find the corrections satisfactory.

I wish you all the best.

Kind regards

Ali Montazeri