Author's response to reviews

Title: Early Identification of Young Children at Risk for Poor Academic Achievement: Preliminary Development of a Parent-Report Prediction Tool

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Version: 3 Date: 4 August 2011

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Drs. Norton and Galbraith,

We are pleased to submit the revised manuscript entitled “Early Identification of Young Children at Risk for Poor Academic Achievement: Preliminary Development of a Parent-Report Prediction Tool” to BMC Health Services Research.

We have paid careful attention to the reviewers’ comments and editorial requirements and revised the manuscript as detailed in the ensuing pages. As per journal guidelines, all changes in the manuscript have been highlighted in yellow. However, for ease of reading, changes to references to conform to the journal’s specified format are not marked.

The primary goal of this project was to create a prediction tool using information from parents that is predictive of early school success (or failure, operationalized as academic achievement) as the first step in a research program whose overarching goal is to tailor pediatric health supervision to individual needs. In this study, we describe the preliminary development and validation of an early school success prediction tool ultimately designed for use in the pediatric office setting. The tool uses only parental report about 12 child, family, and home environment characteristics of two year-old children and we assess its predictive association with school success at ages 6-7 years.

Given the current movement to strengthen developmental assessments within pediatric health supervision, we believe this work is important, relevant, and timely. Findings from a structured literature review that informed this project were published as a project report by Child Trends. However, the results of our data analyses have not been published nor are being considered for publication elsewhere. This manuscript is being submitted only to BMC Health Services Research; it will not be submitted elsewhere while under consideration, it has not been published elsewhere, and, should it be published in BMC Health Services Research, and it will not be published elsewhere--either in similar form or verbatim--without permission of the editors.

Dr. Pati will handle all correspondence regarding this manuscript.

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We are solely responsible for the conception and design of this work, analysis of the data, and preparation of the manuscript to take public responsibility for it. We believe the manuscript represents original, important, and valid work. We certify that there are no affiliations or involvement in any organization or entity with a direct financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in the manuscript. This project was reviewed and approved by the
Institutional Review Board at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Thank you for your consideration,
Susmita Pati, MD, MPH
Kyleen Hashim
Brett Brown, PhD
Alexander G. Fiks, MD, MSCE
Christopher B. Forrest, MD, PhD
Response to Reviewer and Editor Comments

**Version: 2  Date: 14 July 2011  Reviewer: Pamela Davis-Kean**

**Reviewer's report:**
The authors have addressed my issues in the previous review.
Minor Essential Revisions: There continue to be issues with the references that need to be fixed (e.g., 2002; Duncan, Dowsett et al. 2007). The authors should review the manuscript again for errors.

**Response:** We appreciate the reviewer's careful attention to this issue and have revised all of the references to conform to the journal's format.

**Version: 2  Date: 9 July 2011  Reviewer: Mary Eamon**

**Reviewer's report:**
The authors adequately addressed my concerns, and I have only one "minor essential revision": In the second paragraph under "predictor variables" last sentence, the authors stated that "number of books" and "reading to child" were from the "emotional subscale." However, they are from the cognitive stimulation subscale. This should be changed.

**Response:** We appreciate the reviewer's careful attention to this issue and have made this change.

**Other editorial requirements:**

**Response:** We have made changes throughout the manuscript to conform to all of the ensuing editorial requirements.

1. Abstract: Please ensure that the abstract in the manuscript file and on the submission system is identical.

2. NOTE: Keywords are not required for BMC-series journals.

3. Structure: Please check the instructions for authors on the journal website to ensure that your manuscript follows the correct structure for this journal and article type. http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmchealthservres/ifora/#defaulttype

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6. Tables: Please ensure that the order in which your tables are cited is the same as the order in which they are provided. Every table must be cited in the text, using Arabic numerals. Please do not use ranges when listing tables. Tables must not be
subdivided, or contain tables within tables. Please note that we are unable to display vertical lines or text within tables, no display merged cells: please re-layout your table without these elements. Tables should be formatted using the Table tool in your word processor. Please ensure the table title is above the table and the legend is below the table. For more information, see the instructions for authors on the journal website.

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