Author's response to reviews

Title: Correlates of current smoking among school-going adolescents in Punjab, India: results from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey 2003

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

Re: Resubmission of manuscript: MS: 1846271012145964 - Predictors of current cigarette smoking among school-going adolescents in Punjab, India

We thank you for giving us the opportunity to review the manuscript. We have attended to all the reviewers’ suggested and we are pleased now to send you this revised manuscript. We first respond to reviewer Jagadish Mahanta and finally Silvano Gallus. We thank both of them for their useful comments.

Reviewer Jagadish Mahanta

Regarding Table-3
The reviewer wrote “Author should clarify: Smoking status of closest friends- The ‘OR’ as shown in the table against "Row 1- (Most of them smoked) and Row -2 (None of them smoked) in both the model; are showing almost similar.”

Response: That was an error that has been corrected. We believe that error had occurred due to failure to transfer results from one document to the other. We have repeated the analysis, this time adjusting only for a few variables as suggested by the reviewers and a difference in the reported Ors. We thank the reviewer for bringing this error to our attention.

The reviewer reported that “Results-(Para-1, last line)”There was significant difference.......(p=.097)". Author to clarif.”

Response: we have removed this sentence. In fact the reviewer was right in a sense that at α level of 0.05, a p=0.097 was supposed to be no significant. We have provided the opposite interpretation. Currently however, we have only maintained ORs without reference to p values. We have taken this decision since we have strong belief that results that we are reported are better reported with an estimation intention in mind rather than hypothesis testing.

Reviewer: Silvano Gallus

The reviewer reported: At the beginning of the Results section authors state that there was significant difference in the proportions of smokers by gender (p=0.097). This is inconsistent with the first paragraph of the Discussion section: “The difference (among sexes) was however not statistically significant”; and with the Conclusions: “Gender and age were not associated with smoking”

Response: This query was also reported by the other reviewer. We had made an error and this has been corrected. We have reported Ors that shows that there was gender difference.

The reviewer wrote “Given the low number of smokers in this population, I strongly suggest to delete table 3 and to consider in table 2 the factors
associated with current smoking status in males and females together. Estimates for strata of sex could be given, for some factors, in the text. Moreover, I strongly suggest to consider one single model adjusted for age and sex, only. Being the present population enrolled in schools, it is likely that education reflects age. Considering both age and education in the same model could bring to an over-adjustment.

In the text, authors sometimes show multivariate (pag 5) and sometimes univariate (pag 7) estimates. Considering the age- and sex-adjusted model only would help readers to better understand various findings.

Response: we agree with the reviewer. We have therefore only adjusted for age and sex. We have also removed the tables 1 and 2 that would have been redundant and which the reviewer had suggested that we remove. Our results therefore currently report only adjusted estimates.

The reviewer wrote:
Abstract: The Methods should include the sample size. The Results should replace the Conclusions. The Results should show the prevalence of smoking in the present population and the odds ratios (ORs) found by multivariate analyses.

Response: We have reported the sample size in the methods. We have also replaced the conclusions and results sections and put each in its rightful place. We report some odds ratios in the abstract. A comprehensive list is in table 1.

The reviewer wrote: “Background:
The first sentence could be deleted. In case authors decide to keep it, cardiovascular diseases should be added to the list of disorders caused by smoking.”

Response: we have maintained the sentence but have included the reviewer’s suggestion to include cardiovascular diseases.

The reviewer wrote: “In the first paragraph, it is not clear where Mizoram and Goa are. Are their smoking prevalence respectively the maximum and the minimum of the cross country comparison?”

Response: we have re-written the sentences to enhance clarity.

The reviewer wrote “Methods:
Methods should include the sample size.
Page 4, in the last sentence it is written that model 2 was adjusted for the factors in model 1 as well as for age and education level. But model 1 is unadjusted. Authors should carefully read the entire manuscript.”
Response: We have removed this sentence as it is no longer relevant. This change has occurred because we agreed with the reviewer to adjust for only a few factors.

The reviewer wrote: “Results:
Page 5, second sentence: “bivariate analyses” should be “univariate analyses”.
Page 5, second paragraph: substitute “… were 4.88 (95% CI 2.50-9.51) likely to have been current smokers” with “… were 4.88 (95% CI 2.50-9.51) TIMES MORE likely to have been current smokers”.
Page 5, third paragraph: substitute “…all closest FRIEND who smoked were 8.12 LESS likely to have…” with “…all closest FRIENDS who smoked were 8.12 TIMES MORE likely to have…”

Response: we no longer report results from univariate logistic analysis as the reviewer had suggested that the reader may potentially have difficulties in interpreting both multivariate and univariate analyses. We have therefore removed any reference to bivariate analysis.

The reviewer wrote: “Table 2-3:
With reference to “perceived number of friends” I suggest to change the order of the three categories in: 1) Less friends; 2) No difference; 3) More friends.
With reference to “perceived effect of smoking on body weight (delete in table 2 pag 5 the subsequent “on smoking”)” I suggest to change the order of the three categories in: 1) Lose weight; 2) No difference; 3) Gain weight.
Please, also consider to change the order of various categories for the other factors shown in tables.
In table 3, page 17 the second category of “smoking status of closest friends” (none of them smoked) should be deleted.”

Response: we thank the reviewer for this. As per the reviewer suggestions, we have reported only one table. Table 2 has been deleted. We have also used the categories suggested by the reviewer in the analysis. We believe that our agreement with the reviewer has strengthened manuscript.

Reviewer wrote: “In at least two occasions (first paragraph of the Results section, and first paragraph of page 7) the word “although” is used instead of “given that”. A revision of the English language is needed. Authors should carefully read the entire manuscript (tables included) for the presence of several typos and mistakes.”

Response: we have had the manuscript checked for language. Thank you for bringing this shortfall to our attention.

Reviewer wrote: “
Background: The last sentence of the first paragraph on COPD could be deleted.”

Response: we have deleted the sentence.

We thank the two reviewers for the comments.

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