Author’s response to reviews

Title: A systematic review of the incidence of schizophrenia: the distribution of rates and the influence of sex, urbanicity, migrant status and methodology.

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Dear Sir,

We are pleased to be able to resubmit this article, which we think has been substantially improved since the original submission. We are very grateful to the two reviewers (JMS, WE) for their constructive suggestions. We appreciate that the amount of data, and the length of the original manuscript, was overwhelming (exactly how we felt too!).

General points
1. The manuscript has been substantially shortened by moving many of the figures and tables to Supplementary Material. There are now only 6 figures and 7 tables.
2. The text has been re-arranged and shortened, which has contributed to a sharper focus on the main results of the study.
3. The title has also been re-arranged to reflect the flow and emphasis of the revised paper.
4. We have made several corrections to the data (after recent feedback from Dutch and Canadians colleagues). These do not change the findings of the study in any substantial fashion.
5. In order to aid future researchers, we have provided both an Excel file and a searchable Access database in the supplementary material.

Specific comments from Reviewer JMS.
1. All of the suggestions related to editing and flow of the article have been included in this revision.
2. We have left out the long list of countries rather than add in a new table. This material is already shown in Table 1 (the table is sorted by country, author, year).
3. In addition to moving many figures and tables out of the paper into Supplementary Material, several of the tables have been merged.
4. The figures have been changed to black and white, and symbols have been added to improve the interpretation of the figures when printed in black and white.
5. Extra text has been added to the discussion that relates to Other Special groups.

Specific comments from Reviewer WE
1. The figures have been simplified.
2. We prefer to show all the data in cumulative plots rather than limited data in box plots. All the information that would be contained in a Box plots are available in the figures (e.g. 25%, 50% and 75% quantiles are shown). The tables also provide details of these quantiles.
3. We agree that the graphical presentations are more informative than the statistical analyses. Most of this material has now been moved to Supplementary Material. In addition, in this revision the analyses related to methodology have been down-played and given much less ‘ink’ (Tufte's
4. The reviewer suggested that we re-analyze the discrete core data isolating rates from sites with comparable age-population structure. At the time of submission, this material is not available, but will be the focus of future publications.

5. The reviewer questioned if horizontal forest plots (with each rate identified by first author and year of publication) could be used. We had explored this type of presentation. However, because of the large number of rates, even with the smallest legible fonts, the figures need to be divided over three or four pages. To assist the reader/research interested in exploring the data in more detail, we have included a searchable Access database with all the raw data with this revision.

6. The reviewer’s suggestions about improving the text have been followed. The word 'rate item' has been replaced with 'rate', the word 'taxonomy' has been deleted (apart from its use in a metaphorical sense in the final paragraph). The other corrections have been made.