Author's response to reviews

Title: Is health literacy related to health behaviors and cell phone usage patterns among the text4baby target population? A sample survey in 2 WIC clinics

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Prof S. Vandenbroucke
Guest Editor
Archives of Public Health

Dear Prof S. Vandenbroucke:

We would like to thank you and the reviewers for your comments on our manuscript entitled “Is health literacy related to health behaviors and cell phone usage patterns among the text4baby target population? A sample survey in 2 WIC clinics.” We have carefully reviewed and responded to these comments and hope that our response to the reviewers’ comments will be judged satisfactory. Specific comments to the reviewers’ points are addressed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reviewer #1</strong></td>
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<td>The focus of this manuscript, on the relationships between WIC attendees’ health literacy and their health behaviors and mobile phone usage, would be strengthened if there was baseline information on mobile phone penetration among this population.</td>
<td>The majority of WIC attendees had a cell phone, with only 4% of those screened excluded due to not having a cellphone or not being able to receive text if they had a cell phone.</td>
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<td>The national figures provided look at mobile phone ownership in &quot;21 representative countries&quot;. An actual figure for the US would be more relevant.</td>
<td>This change has been made: “83% of American adults own cell phones and three-quarters of them (73%) send and receive text messages.”</td>
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<td>The first sentence in the &quot;Data Collection&quot; section of the methods appears to be incomplete or has its components disordered.</td>
<td>The sentence has been changed to be clearer.</td>
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<td>The results appear competently conducted and are clearly reported. An error does occur in the first line of the &quot;Health literacy and cell phone usage characteristics&quot; section, which incorrectly refers to &quot;7.0% of the population&quot;, when it is describing sample characteristics.</td>
<td>The sentence has been changed to make it clear that we are talking about the sample population.</td>
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<td>The first page of the discussion</td>
<td>Supporting data has been added:</td>
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however, proposes that written messages may need to be simplified further - in the total absence of any supporting data. “Though the developers have written messages that are meant to accommodate lower health literacy levels, the messages may need to be simplified further: limited health literacy on the NVS corresponds to less than a sixth grade reading level, the level at which text4baby messages are written.”

The third page of the discussion introduces a literature review, which is an odd place to do that in a manuscript. The relevant part of that review (the Ahlers-Schmidt et al. paper) should be used there but the rest of the discussion of the review is unneeded at this point in the manuscript. Agreed. The rest has been edited out.

The abstract makes it sound like women in the study are receiving 9 text messages a day from the text4babies program. The results make clear that this isn't the case but this could be made clearer in the abstract. The sentence has been changed from “The majority (69.4%) of respondents received nine or more text messages a day..” to “The majority (69.4%) of respondents received nine or more text messages a day prior to enrollment”

The manuscript is generally well written with just a few writing errors. Each of these errors has been corrected.

Reviewer #2

In the method section and in relation to reference 18, please make it clear to the reader that the English version of the NVS instrument is given in this reference. These changes have been made.

Why were Spanish speaking women excluded given the fact that there is a Spanish version of the NVS instrument. We had to exclude Spanish speakers for several reasons: primarily because of the limited budget for our pilot study, we did not have the resources to support translating the
survey documents as well as hiring additional bi-lingual staff. Moreover, the participating clinics had very few native Spanish speakers. We definitely think it is important to include Spanish speakers to determine any similarities/differences between racial/ethnic groups and are in fact currently developing a program to evaluate the text4baby program throughout Georgia, including Spanish speakers.

| Tables: Indicate the place, time, population and study name in the title. | We have provided these additional details in Tables 1-5. |

In addition to the edits incorporated in our revised manuscript in response to the reviewer’s comments, we made several other minor clarifications throughout the manuscript which we feel greatly improved the overall quality of the manuscript. We trust that our responses are clear and appropriate. Please contact me if further clarification is needed. We look forward to your evaluation of this resubmission.

Elisabeth Poorman, MD/MPH