Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence and determinants of frailty in the absence of disability among older population: A cross sectional study from rural communities in Nepal

Version: 0 Date: 04 Apr 2019

Reviewer: Ana Maseda

Reviewer's report:

Authors establish the prevalence and determinants of frailty in the absence of disability in older people in Nepal. The study is interesting and novelty since most of the published articles are focused on this geriatric syndrome in high-income countries. Therefore, this work is working on a different geriatric population.

Nevertheless, I would like to comment on some major methodological issues that should be changed and revised to get a publishable manuscript.

The term "elderly" should not be used. The terms "older adult" or "older person" would be more adequate. Please see the article: Avers D, Brown M, Chui KK, Wong RA, Lusardi M. Use of the term "elderly". J Geriatr Phys Ther 2011;34(4):153-4. I also propose to read "Out with "the old", elderly, and aged", published in the BMJ. I would ask to avoid such terms along the manuscript.

I would like to propose the authors to refer to "depressive symptomatology or depressive symptoms" better than "depression" along the manuscript since Geriatric Depression Scale is a self-report instrument of depression symptomatology, it is not intended as a clinical diagnostic tool.

BACKGROUND

Since the manuscript is also focusing the research in social factors as determinants of frailty, it would be helpful that authors include also social factors associated with frailty, please see an example in de Labra et al. (2018) published in BMC Geriatrics 2018;18:66.

Page 3, lines 105-106, please specify the setting of this referenced population.

METHODS

I recommend moving the sentence of the approval of the Ethics Committee from the subsection "Independent variable measurement" to the end of the subsection "Study design and participants", just after the explanation of the informed consent.
The exclusion criteria are defined in a too general way, it would be helpful to know how the researchers define each aspect, for example, seriously ill (do they have a list of diseases to establish this aspect?) or mentally disabled (legally disabled or through a diagnostic tool?). Please, specify or provide a detailed description of the establishment of these exclusion criteria.

Besides, it is not clear for me the sentence "concentration status Barthel's scale measuring activities of daily living-ADL" if refers to the variable "memory concentration problems in last 30 days" or if not, this last one is missed and ADL is twice. I would like to know how memory concentration problems are assessed. It is a very important limitation the self-report of diseases, establishing the comorbidity by this method, it would be emphasized in the Limitations section.


Regarding the translation method of the English versions of the survey, I would like to know if in this forward-backward translation sequence different researchers were participating for each translation step or even if a focus group was developed to discuss the final version to ensure accuracy and understanding among the older population.

The statistical analysis section should be more detailed. Important analysis and descriptions are missed, for example, the normality of the data, the between-group comparisons using the chi-square test to compare categorical variables in table 2. If categorical variables were converted to dummy variables for inclusion in the multivariate models. It would be better to establish the cut-off value less than 0.5, avoiding the 0.5. P values are not available and therefore, I am not able to know if there is a reason to include this value. It would be helpful if you detail the regression model included (enter, stepwise forward, backward…).

RESULTS

Table 1, please add a column with the number of participants selected from each Ward to see the distribution of the sample according to the population.

Table 2, please include if the significance of the differences between both groups, with parametric or non-parametric analysis depending on the normality of your data. Please ensure that all variables add 100% and not 99.9% or 100.01%. Regarding smoking and drink habits, it is not clear if those participants with smoking or drinking history are actual or past smokers/drinkers. Authors should explain the amount of alcohol considered to establish a person as a drinker or not, amount, type… of alcoholic drink? Same consideration in the case of doing physical activity, how the authors establish that a participant makes exercise, kcal consumed, minutes of exercise per day…? Please change the Dependent term to "Dependence".
Table 3 should be deleted, no extra information is providing. P values should be also included in table 4, besides the value of % correctly predicted cases with the proposed model. Tables should be modified according to previous comments.

DISCUSSION

The discussion is appropriate but some references should be included to justify the proposals made by the authors. For example, page 6, lines 222-226, the authors justify the outcomes because the nutrition but other aspects are linked to economical status, such as less health status, less education…

Lines 227-232, authors should include a bibliography to justify the aspects mentioned.


REFERENCES

Please, check the reference format according to the submission guidelines. There are a lot of mistakes. For example, journal titles and page numbers abbreviated and not abbreviated, articles with and without doi or doi link. Please, follow the instructions.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics
Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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