Author's response to reviews

Title: Health-related quality of life and pain in children and adolescents - a school survey

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor,

In this revision, we have taken into account the comments made by the reviewers. We would like to express our sincere gratitude for relevant and precise referee comments. A point-by-point reply to reviewers’ remarks and changes made in the text are listed below. Please note that the reviewer comments copied in below, and the changes made in the revised version of the manuscript are done using the track changes mode in MS Word.

We hereby hope that we have addressed the criticised points to your satisfaction, and that the manuscript now can be accepted for publication in BMC Pediatrics.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the authors

Kristin Haraldstad

Response to reviewers:

Kotsedi Daniel Monyeki, PhD, MPH (Reviewer 1): Comment 1 (on introduction): introduction is still not focused on objectives of the study; the relationship between the health quality of life and pain was not mentioned, pain and the quality of life were mentioned separately. I suggest that the author show the link between the two.

Response: Thank you, we have added information to show the link between health-related quality of life and pain, line 74 as follows: Pain can influence daily life in different ways and is
linked to poor school performance, problems in social activities, sleep problems, and reduced quality of life [1, 8].

Comment 2 (in text referencing): Referencing is still not correct, it was not done sequentially on introduction as the Vancouver format requires, for example, reference 40 on line 100 should not be there.

Response: We are sorry for this, and we have changed the references.

Luisa Barros, PhD (Reviewer 2): The authors presented a revised manuscript of "Health-related quality of life and pain in children and adolescents - a school survey", taking in consideration the reviewers comments.

I congratulate the authors on the restructuring of the article that is now much improved.

I have some minor suggestions:

1. Although the abstract is much clearer and well structured, I think the last sentence could be revised: "Age and sex were most significant factors regarding variations in HRQoL, however impaired HRQoL was prevalent in children with pain for all 10 dimensions of the KIDSCREEN-52 questionnaire" Maybe you could say that "HRQoL was impaired for all 10 dimensions of the KIDSCREEN-52 in children with pain"? (The same sentence appear in the results and should also be reviewed.)

Response: Thank you for the comments, we have changed the wording in the abstract and conclusion

2. Introduction: Although the introduction is still long, the focus of the study and its justification is now clear, as is the innovation of this specific study.

3. Methods: The methods are now clear and describe all measures, thus allowing the reader to understand what the results stand for and how they were collected.

In the sentence: "The data collection took place from over a 6-month period from October to April." (lines 122-123) the 1st "from" should be eliminated.

Response: We have removed the sentence as suggested.

4. Data Analysis: Please review the sentence, as there seems to be a repetition: "Nine of the ten dimensions had skewness and kurtosis between ±1, most of them between ±1" (line 181-182). This sentence is repeated in the Results section, where it should be eliminated. In the sentence (line188) "However, we decided to use linear regression of three reasons." , "of" should be "for three reasons".
Response: We have eliminated the sentence in the results section, and we have changed the wording from “of three reasons” to “for three reasons.”

5. Results: For the self-reported absenteeism, only the percentage is reported. In the discussion the authors mention "In our study, several children reported that they had been absent from school due to pain during the last three months" I think it would be interesting to know if reported absenteeism was associated with HRQoL or with pain measures. Both a positive and a negative result about this association would enhance the interest of these results. As it is, this result does not add relevant information.

Response: We agree that the results about absenteeism does not add information as it is, and have removed the information.

6. Discussion: The reference to "another study of pain and HRQoL showed that children with pain problems, such as fibromyalgia, reported significantly poorer HRQoL than did children with cancer and other rheumatic diseases measured with the PedsQL [41]. (line 324-326) is somehow misleading and does not fully report the results of the Varni study. Cancer and rheumatic diseases are diseases where pain is also present. There may be many reasons for differences between these 3 conditions, not restricted to pain differences. As the current study is with a non-clinical sample, I would suggest eliminating this sentence.

Response: Thank you, we have eliminated the sentence as you suggest.

Other minor details:

"and one of the aims of our study were" (line 270 ) should read "and one of the aims of our study was"

"This result is significant but rather tiny" (line 285) the word tiny does not seem very rigorous?

"This is in line with a study of American children (mean age 14 years) with chronic pain showed that pain" a word is missing? (line290) (…that showed?) " an significant health concern" (line 333) should read "a significant…”

Response: Thank you, we have changed the wording in 1.270, 1.285, 1.290 and 1.333.

7. Conclusion: The 1st paragraph only repeats the ideas already made clear in the discussion. Could be greatly shortened.

Response: Thank you for useful comments, we have changed the conclusion and shortened it.

Luciane Costa, DDS, MS, PhD (Reviewer 3): I am happy with the changes made in the manuscript.