Author’s response to reviews

Title: Characteristics of positive-interaction parenting style among primiparous teenage, optimal age, and advanced age mothers in Canada

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Dr. Paramala Santosh,

Please find enclosed a copy of our revised manuscript titled “Characteristics of positive-interaction parenting style among primiparous teenage, optimal age, and advanced age mothers in Canada” co-authored by Dr. Theresa H.M. Kim, Dr. Jennifer Connolly, Dr. Michael Rotondi, and Dr. Hala Tamim, for publication in BMC Pediatrics.

First of all, we wish to thank you for the suggestions and advice from the journal’s reviewers. This reviewer’s comments were addressed and considered, and our explanation of how we chose to incorporate the reviewers’ suggestions is summarized below.

We confirm that this work is original and has not been published elsewhere, nor is it currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. All authors are in agreement with the contents of the manuscript. We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Thank you for all your suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you as you appraise this manuscript for publication.
Sincerely,

Theresa H.M. Kim, PhD
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Thomas Schofield (Reviewer 3)’s comments:

There is no difference across the three age categories in terms of self-reported parenting. […] Consequently, the heart of this manuscript is Table 2, the degree to which these socio-demographic characteristics are correlated with positive interaction parenting across the three groups. […] If there are no *significant* differences across the three age groups in the association between socio-demographic variables and positive-interaction parenting, there is no story to tell.

• Authors’ response: Significant differences were not found across the three age groups at the bivariate level, however, at the multivariable level, maternal age along with a maternal age interaction term was found to be significant, therefore it provided us with a justification to stratify the analysis by maternal age. Moreover, note that our study objective was to investigate the factors associated with positive-interaction parenting within teenage, optimal and advanced age mothers respectively, under the hypothesis that they may in fact differ across age groups. For this reason, the proposed analyses were undertaken. We hope this is sufficiently clear in the introduction section.

Right now the authors appear to want […] and then conclude that those associations between sociodemographic characteristics are only correlated with parenting among that age group. That approach is as fundamentally flawed as looking at a graph of means and deciding that groups must be meaningfully different without consulting a t-test (or statistical equivalent).

• Authors’ response: For each of the regression models, we conducted backward stepwise linear regression for a variety of variables for exploratory purposes. The results presented in Table 2 were the significant predictors retained in each of the models. Clearly, we are not trying to say that there is no effect in the other categories as a lack of statistical significance does not
guarantee no effect. We recognize this point though and this has been re-emphasized in the results and discussion (page 10 and 12).

If the 95% confidence intervals overlap across the three groups [...] the associations between sociodemographic characteristics and positive-interaction parenting are probably invariant across the three age groups. This may be why the authors are disinclined to run the statistical moderation test between sociodemographic characteristic and maternal age group I suggested previously.

• Authors’ response: Respectfully, we believe your approach is fundamentally flawed. As you may be aware, there are a number of articles (e.g. Schenker N & Gentleman JF. 2001. On judging the significance of differences by examining the overlap between confidence intervals. Am Stat. 55 (3): 182) discussing the lack of power when examining the simple overlap of CI’s to assess significance. In short, when CI’s do not overlap, they are significantly different, but it is still possible to have CI’s that do overlap and have statistically significant differences. Given our initial decision to stratify by age group, and explore factors within age categories, we believe the analysis is reasonable.