Author’s response to reviews

Title: ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARIES AND MALNUTRITION IN A SUB-URBAN POPULATION IN NIGERIA

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We will like to thank the reviewer for the suggested edits. We have made efforts to strengthen the introduction in line with the suggestions made. We have also addressed other comments. Please see revision comments below.

introduction and discussion is not adequate. Please make sure it flows and involves pertinent information, for example. I would like to see more in relation to the mechanism of ECC and malnutrition as this is a bidirectional process. THIS HAS BEEN BEEFED UP WITH REFERENCES 29-34

Please correct the definition of ECC according to AAPD—it is not one tooth but one surface with dfms>&gt;0. THIS IS CORRECTED. THANKS FOR PICKING IT UP.

I still have an issue with very low prevalence of ECC in this sample. I asked in the prior review what is the prevalence of ECC in Nigeria? THERE IS NO NATIONAL PREVALENCE OF ECC. THE ONLY HOUSEHOLD SURVEY DETERMINING THE POPULATION PREVALENCE OF ECC WAS CONDUCTED IN ONE OF 774 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS IN NIGERIA. THE PREVALENCE FOR THE STUDY WAS 6.6%.

Are these data known? THE DATA IS NOT KNOWN
How representative the study sample is, it is hard to judge without background information. THE LIMITATION OF THE GENERALISABILITY OF THE DATA IS NOW NOTED IN THE STUDY LIMITATION.

Also, given the very low ECC prevalence (and severity) in the sample-the authors mentioned inflation of variance in the discussion. It needs more explanation. THIS WAS DISCUSSED IN THE STUDY LIMITATION. WE WROTE THUS: The proportion of study participants with ECC was low leading to estimates with wide confidence intervals of some associations. Similarly, the low prevalence of poor oral hygiene may be the reason for the observed lower prevalence of ECC association with it. We addressed the issues of low ECC and poor oral hygiene prevalence using robust estimation of variance so that the observed associations are based on sound statistical techniques. THIS TAKES CARE OF THE CONCERN OF THE REVIEWER

Potential confounding factors related to ECC and not taken into consideration should be mentioned, including access to oral health care, FV applications, history of breastfeeding and feeding at night etc. WE HAVE INCLUDED THIS AS A STUDY LIMITATION