Author’s response to reviews

Title: Overweight and Obesity among Women: Analysis of Demographic and Health Survey Data from 32 sub-Saharan African Countries

Authors:

David Doku (dokudavid@gmail.com)
Subas Neupane (subas.neupane@uta.fi)
Prakash K.C. (Prakash.kc@uta.fi)

Version: 1 Date: 08 Nov 2015

Author’s response to reviews:

Revision: 4th Nov. 2015/Neupane

Overweight and Obesity among Women: Analysis of Demographic and Health Survey Data from 32 sub-Saharan African Countries-PUBH-D-15-00116

Reviewer #1:

Excellent article.

Thank you for your kind words

In abstract I miss the BMI method for obesity and overweight

This has been added now in the abstract (line 33-36)

In tables (if applicable) add in bold the significant findings

and in figures explain the abbreviations of the countries.

Almost all figures are statistically significant therefore it’s not meaningful to make the significant figures bold.

Reviewer #2:

The present study investigated the association of overweight/obesity with wealth, education, and so on using a cross-sectional dataset in sub-Saharan African countries. The prevalence of overweight/obesity by country level in sub-Sahara was already reported from the same survey in part (Steyn and Mchiza, Obesity and the nutrition transition in Sub-Saharan Africa. Ann N Y Acad Sci, 2014). In addition, the associations of overweight and obesity with household wealth and education was reported in some of
the same country from the same survey (Ziraba et al., Overweight and obesity in urban Africa: A problem of the rich or the poor? BMC Public Health, 2009). Therefore, the authors should cite these papers and modify Introduction and Discussion sections for better explanation of what is already known and what is not on this topic.

We do agree that a number of studies have been on the subject in the region. However, these earlier studies focused on different aspects of the phenomenon other than the focus of the present study. We have cited the suggested papers and have provided a justification for our study despite the previous ones. Please see page 4 lines 7-12.

My specific comments are as follows.

Title

1) I feel that title should be more specific to stress what is new in the present study.

For example, association of overweight and obesity with education and so on.

We agree with the reviewer but given that we explored other associations other than education it will be misleading to the include education in the title. Further apart from association we also conducted pooled prevalence as well as rural urban difference. In this respect we have maintained the title.

Results

2) Please add the direction of the association to the description of the results.

In fact the direction of the association has been mentioned clearly already but few texts has been added now to make it further clearer. Please see page 2 lines 17-20.

Background

3) The prevalence of overweight/obesity among women from sub-Saharan countries was already reported (Steyn and Mchiza, Ann N Y Acad Sci, 2014). In addition, the association of overweight/obesity with wealth and education in some of the Sub-Saharan African countries were reported using the dataset from DHS (Ziraba et al., BMC Public Health, 2009). Please cite these papers where appropriate and improve the explanation about what is already known and what is not on these topics.

This has been done as suggested. Please see page 4 lines 7-12.

4) Please add reference to the end of this sentence: "and in developing countries the direction is not consistent"

We were referring to reference number 9. This has been done as suggested. Please 3 lines 24-25.
Methods

Data resources and procedures

5) Please describe the total number of people who were invited to the multi-country survey in sub-Saharan as well as who participated in the survey.

This has been described now in methods. Please see page 5 lines 10-13.

6) If the authors excluded participants without data on BMI in the main analysis, please specify the number of the excluded participants in the text.

This has been described now in methods. Please see page 5 lines 10-13.

Measurements of variables

7) How the categories of relative wealth (poorest to richest) were defined? Quintile of the wealth in the total population? Please clarify this point.

The way of constructing wealth index is explained in detail in the methods. Few texts has been added to clarify it. Please see page 6 lines 9-10.

Table 3

8) Please clarify what is the reference category in calculating ORs for residence, education, and wealth index, respectively.

In Table 3 we have revised the column heading with Urban Vs. Rural and so on, which means that the second part e.g. Rural residents are the reference category. This has also been explained in the statistical analysis (e.g. coding (urban= 0, rural =1))

Figure 1

9) Please do not use abbreviated county names or please explain the abbreviation in the figure legend.

We have now provided the full form of each abbreviation used for country right below each figures.

10) What does the size of the circle for no education mean? Please explain.

This has been added now in the title of each figure.

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to both reviewers for their useful suggestions, which we believe have improved the manuscript significantly.

Thank you.
David T. Doku, Ph.D.

Corresponding author.