Reviewer’s report

Title: Alarming prevalence and clustering of modifiable noncommunicable disease risk factors among adults in Bhutan: a nationwide cross-sectional community survey

Version: 0 Date: 24 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Samer Jabbour

Reviewer's report:

This is a solid manuscript that is well written and easy to read and follow. It is based on a well-established methodology for NCD surveillance (the STEPS instrument). The work reported is rigorous as it's based on a nationally-representative sample. The analysis is adequate and the reporting is balanced. The manuscript follows a standard approach of most other NCD STEPS reports in that prevalence of risk factors, both behavioral and biological, is presented. This manuscript adds to the already-published report of the Bhutan NCD STEPS survey by reporting associations with socio-demographic characteristics as well as clustering of risk factors.

Some of the findings are astonishing, e.g. high salt intake affecting almost the whole population. To distinguish the manuscript from other NCD STEPS papers, it would be of interest to show the contrast between the findings of this study vs surveys from other countries. All NCD STEPS seem to show high levels of NCD risk factors, clustering of risk factors, and association with sociodemographic variables. Are there special findings that deserve the particular attention of the reader?

I would also like to invite the authors to re-consider their recommendations in the 'Conclusion': Rather than focus on 'lifestyle modification', which places emphasis on people and individual responsibility, perhaps there is a need to consider policy and sociopolitical and economic factors that have undermined global and national progress to address the rise of NCDs and their risk factors in Bhutan as elsewhere.

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

Yes

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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