Author’s response to reviews

Title: Health promoting lifestyle of university students in Saudi Arabia: a cross-sectional assessment

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Health promoting lifestyle of university students in Saudi Arabia: a cross-sectional assessment

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BMC Public Health
Dear Mr Vinluan,

Your manuscript "Health promoting lifestyle of university students in Saudi Arabia: a cross-sectional assessment" (PUBH-D-18-00142R1) has been assessed by our reviewers. Based on the original reviewer reports, and my own assessment as Editor, I am pleased to inform you that it is potentially acceptable for publication in BMC Public Health, once you have carried out some essential revisions suggested by our reviewers.

Their reports, together with any other comments, are below. Please also take a moment to check our website at

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A point-by-point response letter must accompany your revised manuscript. This letter must provide a detailed response to each reviewer/editorial point raised, describing exactly what amendments have been made to the manuscript text and where these can be viewed (e.g. Methods section, line 12, page 5). If you disagree with any comments raised, please provide a detailed rebuttal to help explain and justify your decision.

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A decision will be made once we have received your revised manuscript, which we expect by 27 Jul 2018.

We look forward to receiving your revised manuscript and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Best wishes,

Emma Louise Giles, PhD
BMC Public Health
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Technical Comments:
- Please provide email address of all authors.
- Please change 'Introduction' to "Background".
- Please provide list of abbreviations used (if any).
- Please provide declaration heading.

- Please change 'Conflict of interest' to "Competing interests".

Editor Comments:

Thank you for your revisions so far. That said, I feel that you have not sufficiently and/or explicitly addressed some of the reviewer comments from the first round. Please see below.

Reviewer 1 posed the following comments:

1. The authors stated that the aim of the study was to determine factors influencing health promoting behaviours among university student, applying for the first time HPLP to Saudi Arabia students. HPLP aims to measure the extent to which adults engage in following health-promoting lifestyle giving an overall score and subscales scores, allowing meaningful comparison. Why the authors did not calculate the score and adopted percentages for presenting data?

Your reply of: We are pleased that you reviewed our manuscript. In response to the comment. We stream down the survey questionnaire into 3 subscales to ensure the cultural appropriateness and relevance of the instrument in Saudi Arabia that is why we did not calculate the overall scores and subscales scores. However, we have the 3 subscales scores to show and add another table if the reviewer wants to include this information.

Editor comment: It would be useful to see these three sub-scales. You also name it “health promotion lifestyle profile scale II” on page 5. Please ensure it is named correctly as “health promoting lifestyle profile II”.

Reply: We already included the scores of the three subscales in the table and results section.

2. The authors only partially apply HPLP. When considering lifestyle and health I cannot contemplate smoking. Why did the authors completely avoid to consider smoking behaviours?

Your reply of: We appreciate and agreed with the reviewers’ comments about considering the smoking behaviors of the students however, smoking is a sensitive issue in Saudi Arabia particularly with females that is why we did not include this in our study.
Furthermore, based from our literature review majority of the studies about prevalence of smoking among females in the Saudi Arabia is still low, not exceeding 15%. For example, in a 2013 national survey tobacco consumption in Saudi Arabia, among 10,735 participants completed the survey 1.1% were females [1]. Another study shows the prevalence of smoking among female students found 0.9% (N=3) were active smokers and 13.3% (N=44) who tried smoking among 332 participants [2].

Reference:


Editor comment: It would be useful to have this rationale clearly stated in the background/methods.

Reply: We appreciate your comments and in response we already included a rationale in the background (P 3, Line 25) and method section (P. 6 1st paragraph).

Reviewer 2 posed the following comments:

1. Methods section - as questionnaire was distributed in both hard copy forms and electronically how did the authors control for duplicated studies completed by the same student.

Your reply of: With regards to the reviewers comment about the control for duplicated studies, the survey questionnaire was distributed in each department by one doctor or researcher assigned to that college. Also, one doctor in the female college used an online version of the questionnaire via Google Forms and the link was sent to all students in this college.

Editor comment: Your reply needs to be stated explicitly in the methods.

Reply: As suggested by the reviewers we stated this explicitly in the methods section. (Please see page 5, Line 7).
2. It is also not clear whether a sample size calculation was conducted, retrospectively or otherwise to show if the study was sufficiently powered to detect any differences.

Your reply of: With regards to sample size calculation, we used the formula by Krejcie & Morgan in their 1970 article “Determining Sample Size for Research Activities” to optimally estimate the population in the study.

Editor comment: This needs to be explicitly stated in the methods.

Reply: As suggested by the reviewers we stated this explicitly in the methods section. (Please see page 5, 1st paragraph).

Reply: As suggested by the reviewers we stated this explicitly in the methods section. (Please see page 5, Line 7).

3. Page 5 lines 28-54 - Please provide clearer justification for why the survey was refined, references to support the three sub-scales would be beneficial. It is also not clear why a shorter study would lead to questions being properly answered.

Your reply of: With regards to the survey questionnaire, before we started the process of data gathering, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic language by a professional language translator. Also the questionnaire was pilot tested to ensure the reliability, validity, and its appropriateness with respect to cultural relevance here in Saudi Arabia. The Arabic translated HPLP questionnaire had an acceptable Cronbach's alpha of 0.94. To ensure the cultural appropriateness and relevance the instrument the researchers decided to stream down the HPLP to three subscales consisting of 26 items. The chosen subscales are the ones known to have the most direct effect on health status, including health responsibility [9 items], physical exercise [8 items] and nutrition [9 items]. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of the three subscales that have been used varied between .79 and .87.

Editor comment: This needs to be explicitly stated in the methods.

Reply: As suggested by the reviewers we stated this explicitly in the methods section. (Please see page 6, Line 4).

4. Page 6 line 26 - Any justification for the study being heavily weighted towards female participants

Your reply of: We agreed with the reviewers’ comments about the population in this study is heavily weighted towards female. We believe that the reason was due to majority of the students
who participated in the study were female and more concern about the study. Also, male students may believe that our study was not valuable.

Editor comment: This needs to be explicitly stated in the discussion and/or other appropriate location in the manuscript.

Reply: As suggested by the reviewers we stated this explicitly in the methods section. (Please see page 12, Line 12).

5. Page 6 line 58 - What direction was this significant difference?

You reply of: About the direction of the significant difference, we used chi square analysis and the frequency or response of students between health and non-health colleges in each category.

Editor comment: This needs to be explicitly stated in the manuscript, in terms of the direction.

Reply: As suggested by the reviewers we stated this explicitly in the methods section. (Please see page 6, Line 20).

6. Page 7 line 4-17 - As above, you need to be clear what direction the difference is in, where the health or non health college students more likely to follow a planned exercise programme. This could be made clearer for all of the results - too many examples to comment on them all.

Your reply of: We used chi square analysis and the frequency or response of students between health and non-health colleges in each category to determine the direction of the significant difference.

Editor comment: This needs to be explicitly stated in the manuscript, in terms of the direction.

Reply: As suggested by the reviewers we stated this explicitly in the methods section. (Please see page 6, Line 20).

Overall editor comment: When making any revisions based on the above, please clearly indicate the page and line number(s) of the changes in your response letter. Thank you.

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