Author’s response to reviews

Title: Development of the Chilean front-of-package food warning label

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Author’s response to reviews:

Date: April 22th, 2019

To: Natalie Pafitis and Eva Szunyogova
Editors, BMC Public Health

Original article: “Development of the Chilean front-of-package food warning label”

Dear Editors:

Following your advice, we are enclosing a revised version of the article “Development of the Chilean front-of-package food warning label”, by M. Reyes, M.L. Garmendia, S. Olivares, C. Aqueveque, I. Zacarias and C. Corvalán, together with a point-by-point response to each of the comments of the reviewers.

This new version has been edited according to the suggestions of the reviewers. In brief, we have provided more detail on the methods, re-structured tables and figures of results and provided more contextual comparison to our findings. Overall, we believe this new version of the manuscript is much improved; we thank you and the reviewers for this opportunity.
I certify that all authors have participated substantially either in the conception, data acquisition, analysis and writing of this work. The authors have reviewed and approved the new version of this manuscript submitted and take public responsibility for its content. There are no competing interests to report.

My co-authors and I thank you for your time in reviewing this original article and hope you will find acceptable for publication this new version of the manuscript.

Sincerely,

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Dear editor and reviewers,

We would like to thank the thoughtful comments and suggestions provided in the review process. We think that the manuscript significantly improved after including them. Please see how we addressed them in detail:

EDITOR COMMENTS:

Editor Comments:

Please provide, after the References, a section titled “Additional files” where you list the following information about each of your supplementary files: * File name (e.g. Additional file 1), * Title of data, * Description of data. Please ensure also that all additional files have been cited in the main manuscript.
RESPONSE: we added the section requested and ensured all additional files were cited in the manuscript. The only one we left uncited was the COREQ check-list which you asked us to include as an additional file.

REVIEWER REPORTS:

Paula Dworatzek, PhD RD (Reviewer 1): This is a well-written manuscript that provides the reader with important details on policy implementation at a National level and will be of interest to readers worldwide.

RESPONSE: We thank the reviewer for her positive assessment of the manuscript.

While the manuscript is well-written, it could benefit from some English language editing (comments re: language were made up to the end of the introduction).

RESPONSE: The manuscript has been revised by a native English-speaker.

Abstract:

Line 44: suggest 'significantly' instead of 'significant'

RESPONSE: we made the change suggested (line 44)

Lines 45-46: Pleased to see data presented in the abstract; however, the reader is unsure what the results represent. Please add more detail and scale to improve clarity.

RESPONSE: Unfortunately, given the allowed length of the abstract we are unable to provide more details, so we have decided to only provide qualitative results

Introduction:

Line 66: remove 'have'

RESPONSE: Done

Line 67: add 'ly' to relentless

RESPONSE: Done (line 68)

Line 71: suggest adding the following wording e.g., that inform 'the consumer of' this condition
Lines 76-77: Please add references for GDA, Nordic Keyhole and traffic-light. Would also be useful to add UK for the traffic-light.

RESPONSE: references were added for each one (Line 78-79, references 8-10)

Line 90: remove 'ed' from 'implemented'

RESPONSE: Done (see change in line 95)

Line 92: need to add the word 'are' after results.

RESPONSE: We change this final sentence (line 96)

Please also add references to indicate which countries are in the process of warning label implementation.

RESPONSE: we included 5 new references where the reader will find the countries that are in the process of implementing warning labels (see line 97, references 16-20)

Methods:

Line 114: I believe 'revised' should be changed to 'reviewed'

RESPONSE: done (see line 121).

Line 119: Please explain what the Metaplan technique is.

RESPONSE: in the methods section we added a brief description of what Metaplan technique is. Lines 128-130 : “Briefly, the metaplan technique is a method for facilitating group discussion that allows organizing and providing structure of ideas and opinions obtained from a brainstorming process; categorization and ranking of ideas may allow that new connections emerge”

Line 120: Please spell out the meaning of the acronym INTA on first use.

RESPONSE: Done (see line 131)

Lines 137-138, and 154: These statements seems like results, and perhaps should be moved to the results section.

RESPONSE: following the reviewer advise, we have included also in the results section that number of prototypes obtained in each of the stages (Lines 261 &271)
Line 169: I believe this should be 'where' not 'were', and remove 'the' after 'being'
RESPONSE: Done (see line 181)

Line 185: Usually these types of questions are referred to as Likert-like scales.
RESPONSE: we have used the term Likert-like scale (see line 193)

Line 197: remove 'were'
RESPONSE: we changed the complete paragraph.

Lines 199-202: the formula used to compute the 'Ability to modify intended purchase' is not clear. Please try to provide more clarity on this. See later comment on Additional File 5.
RESPONSE: We have followed the reviewer advise and we have now included Table 1 describing the composition and computation of the different scores, including the range of potential values; therefore, we have cut the text and only including a list of the outcome variables (line 192-198)

Lines 202-206: Similarly, these sentences do not provide the reader with a clear idea of the comparative prototype score. While you referred the reader to additional files, I would suggest a little more detail here to make this section more clear.
RESPONSE: We agree with the reviewer and we have also included this score on Table 1 with a detailed description of the questions included and the potential range of values of the score.

Lines 208-209: Please provide more detail on the qualitative analyses.
RESPONSE: Following the reviewer advise, we have added a more detailed description of the qualitative analyses in Lines 202-206: “Qualitative Phase: records from the Lay Audience Groups and Expert Group Meetings’ were used for content analysis. Specially trained research assistants coded answers to specific questions that addressed different design aspects of the FOP, created an Excel sheet (Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA, USA) and tabulated the frequency of each of the answers. Most frequent answers were considered for the design of the prototypes tested on the next phase.”

Lines 210-211: The bracketed note does not seem necessary here, especially if there is more clarity provided in methods.
RESPONSE: Done (Line 207)
Lines 211-214: Please specify which variables underwent each test. At present it is too vague for the reader to decipher.

RESPONSE: we have provide more details on the quantitative analyses in Lines 207-2013 “In the Quantitative Sub-study #1, chi-square was used to compare visibility (\%) and ANOVA & Bonferroni to compare means in understanding score, intended purchase score and ability to modify intended purchase among the 15 prototypes. In the Quantitative Sub-study #2 chi-square was used to compare visibility (\%) and T-test was used to compare means in understanding score, intended purchase score and ability to modify intended purchase between the 2 prototypes”

Line 214: Normally the version of SPSS is also provided.

RESPONSE: we provided SPSS version used for the analysis (see line 213)

Lines 303-306: Recognizing that it may be difficult to find published papers for references, would it be possible to include weblinks or some other type of reference to lead the reader to information on what these other countries have been doing?

RESPONSE: we included the same 5 references from the background (see line 303, references 16-20)

Line 359: Should 'Excess of' be changed to 'High in' as you reported in the previous paragraph that the government was not able to implement using the word 'Excess'.

RESPONSE: we replaced “Excess of” by “High in” (see line 362)

Table 1: It may be preferred to flip this table so that the row headings become column headings and visa-versa. This would allow for the 15 prototypes to be presented vertically, and you would also be able to identify whether the variable was a % or mean±SD without using a symbol. In this format, it will be easier for the reader to look down the column for each variable. Either way, I would suggest specifying % or mean without the use of symbols. For specifying the statistical procedures, the symbol should be fine. It would also be useful, both in the Table and the Methods, to indicate what the maximum score is for each variable.
RESPONSE: we thank the reviewer for this suggestion; we have made all the changes suggested and we agree that now this table is much easier to read. We also flipped Table 3 to make it consistent with this new format.

Figure 1: This figure may not be necessary if Table 1 is flipped, as Table 1 may allow for adequate visualization of the symbols. The content of the figure 1 legend, could be added as a table legend, to Table 1. This may allow for some of the additional file content (e.g., additional file 5) to be included in the manuscript, which could be beneficial, as some people may not bother to access the additional file content.

RESPONSE: we deleted this figure and included its legend on table 2.

Additional File 5: This table is essential to include in the manuscript as it really assists the reader in understanding the variables and how they were computed. For each computed variable that is a combination of variables, please indicate minimum and maximum scores.

RESPONSE: We thank the reviewer for this suggestion. In this new version of the manuscript, previous additional file #5 is now Table 1 and indicates how indices were computed and the range of potential values.

Reviewer 2 (Reviewer 2):

PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS: The manuscript presents the sequence of events that Chile underwent in choosing a warning label for implementation. The study provides an important insight into the process and the reader is presented with a broad overview.

RESPONSE: We thank the reviewer for the positive comment of our manuscript

The study would benefit from more specific information and detail and could be better structured to improve readability.

RESPONSE: we have followed the suggestions of both reviewers and provided more details regarding the methodology of the study as well as making several additions to the discussion; we believe the new version of the manuscript is improved.
REQUESTED REVISIONS:

The manuscript could benefit from a section highlighting the design aspects of the warning label and why these may explain their ease of use (and perhaps selection instead of the traffic-light labels).

RESPONSE: we have included in the discussion a paragraph that describes the design of the label and we have then presented the evidence that supports that simpler messages are easier to understand for consumers. Lines 311-314: “The warning label selected in this study had a very simple design; it was a black & white octagon as in a stop-sign and it only included the wording “Excess in” (see Additional File 2). Moreover, in the decree of implementation of the law precise indications were included regarding the size and location of the labels based on the area of the main display panel of the packaged foods”

Could the authors give the reader more context around how the traffic light labels were replaced by the warning label in the framing of the Chilean Law?

RESPONSE: we have incorporated in the introduction a more detailed description of the difficulties surrounding the implementation of traffic-lights in Chile. See lines 81-88: “In the case of Chile, initially the UK traffic-light was proposed as the FoP labelling system. This proposal was in line with the international experience but focus groups conducted during the preliminary discussions of the law showed the system was difficult to understand by Chileans [12] who tended to average the different colors; several other studies have now confirmed these findings [13-15]. Moreover, industry also confronted the use of the traffic-light; therefore, a more general description was required for the approval of the Law in the senate and thus, in the final version of the Law traffic-lights were replaced by the use of warning labels [4].”

The methods section doesn't quite clarify how the design prototypes were selected. Did the audience come up with these options or were they presented to them?

RESPONSE: lay audience and experts contributed in defining major text and design characteristics of the labels; based on these recommendations the researchers and the design company worked to create the different prototypes to be tested in the quantitative phase. We have clarified this in Lines 150-152: “Researchers analyzed the conclusions in each of the sessions and together with a food design company developed 24 prototypes that fulfilled the recommendations obtained from the metaplan”; & in Lines 167-170: “Researchers analyzed the scores given by the experts and complemented this information with notes of the discussions and specific suggestions. Based on the suggestions, researchers together with the food design company created 15 prototypes of warning labels to be tested in the Quantitative Phase”
What was the Metaplan protocol like? It would be worthwhile including that in the manuscript.

RESPONSE: on lines 144-149 of the methodology we have included a brief description of the protocol of the Metaplan sessions: “Briefly, facilitators started each session with a short introduction of the objectives of the session. Participants were then invited to provide their opinions regarding text and design options for the labels writing their ideas on color-cards; each color represent different aspects to be considered (such as figure, colors, wording, etc. of the label). Facilitators were then in charge of organizing the cards of on a panel and guiding the group to prioritize answers on each of the topics”

The methodology for the phase-wise development of the warning label would need to be made more explicit in the introductory section of the methods.

RESPONSE: in the introduction of the methods section we have made clearer that this is a stepwise study with subsequent phases that provide complementary information. On lines 102-108 we have added the following paragraph: “The study was performed in subsequent phases: (i) Literature Review, that provided basic information on design aspects of the label, (ii) Qualitative Phase (Lay Audience and Expert Group Meetings), that captured people’s perception on design aspects of the label that helped for narrowing down the options to be tested in the (iii) Quantitative Phase (Sub-studies #1 and #2), that provided information of the performance of the different prototypes in terms of visualization, easy to understand, and purchase behavior”.

ADDITIONAL REQUESTS/SUGGESTIONS:

The authors might consider better organizing the methods results and the discussion sections.

RESPONSE: based on the reviewers comments we have added more details on the methods and the discussion sections; we have also reorganized the tables and deleted one figure that did not seemed necessary any more. As a result, of all these changes we feel the article is now much easier to follow and to understand.

They could also present information on alternative strategies or methods they explored but did not finally adopt or utilize in their phase-wise study.

RESPONSE: all the strategies used are presented in the text; there were no other methods explored.