Author’s response to reviews

Title: Assessing skin disease and associated health-related quality of life in a rural Lao community

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Dr Alexander Zink
Editorial Office
BMC Dermatology
5th November 2018
Dear Dr Zink,

I am pleased to present our resubmission of our original research article entitled Assessing skin disease and associated health-related quality of life in Laos for consideration for publication in BMC Dermatology.

We have responded to the reviewers’ comments and all the changes to the document have been tracked.

We very much hope that these improvements will result in the article being deemed acceptable for publication in BMC Dermatology.

Yours sincerely,

Catriona Wootton

Response to comments

Editor Comments:

Thank you for submitting your manuscript to BMC Dermatology and your time and effort spent in addressing the reviewers comments. I would be delighted if you could further address the minor points of one reviewer.

Please also suggest to refer and cite the study by Saka B et al. Acne in Lomé, Togo: clinical aspects and quality of life of patients. BMC Dermatol. 2018; 18: 7 discussing acne in a rural population in Togo for comparison to your rural population in Laos.

Thank you for suggesting this study, it is a very interesting paper but sadly I think comparisons with our study are difficult for several reasons. The patients in Saka’s study were assessed in one of three Dermatology centres in the capital of Togo and only patients with acne were selected for the study. Therefore the incidence of acne in the population cannot be assessed or compared to our study. In addition, the methodology cannot be compared as the patients were attending a specialized Dermatology centre, rather than being assessed in their rural village as our cohort were.
Reviewer reports:

Danielle Böhmer (Reviewer 1): Dear Mrs. Wootton,

Thank you for your resubmission and for addressing all the Points adequately and explaining some of the defaults of the study.

The key message is more present and understandable now.

I do maybe recommend another proof-reading, if at your availability.

I am glad that the key message is clearer now, many thanks for your help with this.

Barbara Schuster (Reviewer 2): This is a successful revision of the original manuscript. Methodological weaknesses of the study are now appropriately discussed by the authors. Reasons for specific methodological decisions (e.g. selection of just one village) and resulting limitations are explained. The aim of the study and the conclusion have been adapted to match the scale of the study.

However, there is one section that still needs some adjustment: On page 7, the authors claim that the age distribution in the sample matches the age distribution in the Lao population. With the new and more precise age grouping, this gets a lot clearer. However, there is a large discrepancy for the group aged 15-24 years and also a smaller one for the people aged 65 and older. Possible explanations for this are discussed later on. Still, the claim that the age distribution in the sample and the Lao population are similar needs to be restricted, e.g. "With the exception of the age groups 15-24 years and 65 years and older, the age distribution in this sample was similar to the age distribution in the population as a whole:"

Thank you, this makes the paper more accurate, we have changed the text to read:

With the exception of the age groups 15-24 years and 65 years and older, the age distribution in this sample was similar that of the population as a whole:

Many thanks for taking the time to review our paper and for your helpful suggestions.
Maria Isabel Schmidgen (Reviewer 3): The authors have been able to solve all of the relevant issues and the questions of this reviewer were appropriately addressed. This reviewer can recommend publication.

Thank you, and thank you for taking the time to review our paper.