Author’s response to reviews

Title: Cost-effectiveness analysis of a school-based dental caries prevention program using fluoridated milk in Bangkok, Thailand

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Editorial Office

BMC Oral Health

Re OHEA-D-16-00511R1: “Cost-effectiveness analysis of a school-based dental caries prevention program using fluoridated milk in Bangkok, Thailand”.

Dear Editorial Office,

Thank you for your letter dated 3rd of January 2018 advising us that we could resubmit a revised manuscript. We note that the reviewers raised some helpful comments. My colleagues and I have reviewed the manuscript in view of the reviewers’ comments and have addressed them as follows:

Reviewer reports:

Editor Comments:

1. Put the years the study covers in the background section of the manuscript to make it clear what period of time the manuscript is concerned with.
Reply: Noted and included

2. In the abstract change the subheading labelled 'Objective' to the 'Background'
   Reply: Noted and modified

3. Please include the emails of all co-authors on the title page
   Reply: Noted and included

4. Change the heading labelled 'Materials and Model Development' to 'Methods'
   Reply: Noted and included

5. In the declarations section please rename the subheading 'Ethics Approval' to read 'Ethics approval and Consent to Participate'. The text below this subheading does not require editing.
   Reply: Noted and modified

6. In the declaration for funding please include the grant number, if possible. Also please include the role of the funding body in the design of the study and collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and in writing the manuscript. If the funding body had no such role please state this in the manuscript.
   Reply: Noted and included. Grant number not available.

Reviewer reports:

(Reviewer 2):

1. In the background section, move the paragraph that begins on line 43, page 3 to be the second paragraph.
   Reply: Noted and modified
Reword the last sentence in the paragraph to clarify what is meant by "relevant to Thailand conditions."

Reply: Noted and clarified

Line 41, delete the change in wording of the last sentence. The previous wording was better English.

Reply: Noted and modified

2. In the second paragraph now beginning line 21, the authors talk about the "oral health programme." They create confusion here. They never say clearly in the manuscript if the control school is receiving all these benefits except the milk fluoridation. The control costs later in the manuscript don't seem to include these costs. The tables also do not include the enumerated control costs. There is a serious lack of clarity about the control throughout the manuscript.

Reply: The cost for (non-fluoridated) milk production, monitoring and distribution, etc. are not include for either community. This costs are common and not modified for the intervention under study, in this case the addition of F. This is a common practice in economic evaluations. Therefore, only the additional costs of adding F and, monitoring collection and distribution of samples, etc. are included in this analysis. Nonetheless, we have emphasised and clarified in the manuscript that the costs of production and monitoring refer to milk-fluoridation.

3. Page 4, paragraph 2 (line 19) requires careful editing. This is not the place to be reviewing possible formats. In this paragraph, the authors should state the format and model.

Reply: Noted and modified

The sentence on line 32 can be deleted.

Reply: Noted and deleted

The second sentence "Health economists…) on line 43 can be deleted.
Reply: Noted and modified

To the extent it is important to comment on these aspects, this should be in the discussion.

4. Page 5, line 9—change the word "subjects" to "categories".
Reply: Noted and modified

5. The URLs within the text should be archived if possible.
Reply: Noted and include in the reference list

6. Page 9, line 15—move the sentence "Health benefits…were not discounted" to the end of the previous paragraph. Delete the remainder of the paragraph.
Reply: Noted and deleted

7. Page 10, line 11—fix the grammar "data were". Line 18—change "presented" to "published".
Reply: Noted and modified

8. Page 12, line 17—use 600 instead of spelling this out.
Reply: Noted and modified

9. In the results section, the grammar should be reviewed by a Native English speaker. Sometimes the past tense is used while in other places the conditional is used. It is confusing and inconsistent.
Reply: The results section and the whole paper was reviewed by a professional proof reader, native speaker.
10. Page 14, line 21—change the sentence to read "cost to the government sponsoring agency". Delete the parenthetical (e.g. BMA). Line 46, provide a reference when talking about other programs.

Reply: Noted and deleted

11. Page 22, the first table should be labeled Table 1. Revise the description of the table so it can stand alone. Add the location of the analysis, the time period, etc. Modify the footnote to provide the USD equivalent or similar to make it easier for the reader who may not be familiar with the value of the Baht. Revise the descriptions of the other tables accordingly so that they can be read and understood without referring to the text.

Reply: Noted and modified