Author’s response to reviews

Title: Prevalence of dysmenorrhea and predictors of its pain intensity among Palestinian female university students

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Author’s response to reviews:

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Dear editor,

Greetings and hope you are in a good health

Thanks a lot for the comments and suggestions which I answered in full in the revised edition of the manuscript.

Below is my response to reviewers’ comments and suggestions.

Reviewer number 1

1) In the tables describing univariate and multivariate analyses, the beta coefficients are reported, but odds ratios are reported in text. Can this be clarified?

Wherever appropriate, both significant p values along with standardized beta coefficients with 95% confidence interval were added all through the manuscript.

2) Additionally was back pain put in any of these regression models? As it is a known fact that back pain is associated with dysmenorrhoea.

Back pain is part of the overall pain assessed by the VAS and the pain intensity was used as dependent variable in multivariate analysis. Therefore, back pain was included as part of the dependent variable and cannot be used as independent variable!
3) Were there any data collected on hormonal contraceptive use, depression or how often pads/tampons were changed in a day (depicting menstrual flow)? If so, it would be worthwhile incorporating these data.

Please note that no data about hormonal contraceptives were obtained. It must be emphasized here that 99% of surveyed students are Muslim and single and had no sexual activity or contraceptive use. Furthermore, no information regarding number of pads were obtained.

4) Would the authors consider re-running multivariate analyses using backward stepwise elimination and removing variables with a p value > 0.1?

Multivariate analysis using backward stepwise elimination method of variables with p value greater than 0.1 was implemented and did not change the type of significant predictors.

Fatai Adesina Maruf, Ph.D (Reviewer 2):

ABSTRACT

- Line 21 to 22: The statement 'The mean±SD of pain was 64 (80.34%).' is difficult to understand. There is no indication of a mean value or SD in the sentence.

- It will be more helpful to state the specific univariate and multivariate analyses employed. This will make it easier for the reader to make a better sense of the result.

Please see revised abstract. Irrelevant sentences were deleted and other sentences regarding mean were corrected. Details about univ and multivariate analysis were provided in methodology and result section. Due to word number limitations, details about univ and multivariate analysis were kept minimum.

BACKGROUND

- Apart from the first paragraph that presents different definition of dysmenorrhea, there is no attempt to describe dysmenorrhea in a way to enable someone who has not experienced it to understand its nature in terms of presentation, reported predisposing factors, sources of relief, psychological and socio-economic impacts etc. Another paragraph after the first one could be used to do justice to this.

- Line 48: Change 'mong' to 'among'.

Please see revised methodology lines 75 - 91

METHODOLOGY
- A questionnaire was developed by generating questions from a review of relevant literature. However, there is no report of how this questionnaire was validated. In addition a vivid description of the questionnaire, in terms the nature of response set and whether the questionnaire items were grouped into domains or not, is not provided.

Please see revised lines 109 - 132

- Copies of the questionnaire were distributed at 7 different sites from 12 to 1 pm over four days. Did the authors involve research assistants? How many were they? How were the copies of questionnaire collected back?

Please see revised lines 133 - 138

- The authors state that ethical approval was obtained from an institutional review board, but do not specify the board. It is required that the name of an institutional review board is stated.

Please see revised lines 145 - 145

- The author stated that variables were categorised to facilitate analysis. Were all variables categorised? What was the nature of categorization?

Please see revised line 150 - 155

- It is not informative enough to state that univariate and multivariate analyses were employed. It will be more helpful to the reader to specify the univariate and multivariate analyses employed.

Please see revised lines 159 - 170

- Lines 48-50 (last paragraph): The sentence 'Univariate analysis .................' has to be reviewed.

Please see revised lines 159 - 170

RESULTS

- Lines 31-38 (First paragraph): The sentence 'When asked about................................. approximately 800 USD.' has to be reviewed.

- Lines 12-14 (Second paragraph): The sentence 'Univariate analysis ........................... those having no pain.' has to be reviewed.

Please see revised result section

DISCUSSION
I suggest the authors find away of summarising the prevalence rates from different countries in the first paragraph of discussion. Instead of reviewing them one by one, the rates could be reported as a range to give a picture of the position of the current finding in the reported range.

- Line 41 (last sentence of the last paragraph): I suggest the authors rephrase the sentence to mean the need to interpret the data with caution.

- Lines 12-17 (First paragraph): The sentence 'A review study ........................................ in Bangladesh,' need to be reviewed.

- Lines 17-19 (First paragraph): The sentence 'A study conducted ................................ having moderate to severe pain.' has to be reviewed.

- Lines 58-17 (Second paragraph): The sentence 'In Saudi Arabia, a study conducted ................................ were depressed mood and anger.' has to be reviewed.

- Lines 16-17 (Second paragraph): Change 'reported' to 'report'.

- Lines 55-556 (Third paragraph): Remove 'and its role'.

- Lines 16-16 (Third paragraph): The phrase 'Association between ....................... and irregular menses' has to be reviewed.

Please see revised lines 237 – 256

CONCLUSION

- The conclusion needs to be based on the objectives of the study. Other pieces of information in the form of recommendations could be part of the discussion.

Please see revised conclusion 300 - 305