Reviewer’s report

Title: Economic burden of symptomatic iron deficiency - A Survey among Swiss women

Version: 3 Date: 07 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Michèle Dramaix-Wilmet

Reviewer's report:

The authors provided satisfactory answers to my questions and their modifications in the text are also relevant. However, I still have two minor comments.

In my 1st review:

The question about Figure 1 was: "266 women (18%) with missing information were eliminated, were the characteristics of these women not too different from those of women included in the analyses?"

And the author's response is: "given that some information on their iron deficiency status was missing, we were forced to exclude them from the sample. We are not able to judge, whether these individuals were different from the rest of the sample".

My new comment is: I agree with the authors to say that women with ID status missing must be excluded from the analyzes. But my question was about the characteristics of these women. Were differences in age, civil status, region … (characteristics described in table 1) between excluded and non-excluded women? Is it possible to analyze these differences or at least some of them?

The question about the hypothesis tests was: "The methodology refers to 3 tests: t, Mann-Whitney and Chi²; where are these tests applied?"

And the author's response is: "Discrete numeric/ continuous variables were analyzed with a t-test (for non-skewed data) or a non-parametric test (e.g. Mann-Whitney U test for skewed data). Bivariate associations of categorical variables were assessed with the chi squared test. Mean number of consultations and mean duration of sick leave showed a skewed distribution. Therefore, we used a non-parametric test. We understand your point, but we decided to remain the description of the statistics and results as it is. Otherwise, we would need to add for all p-values the applied test. We think it is more reader-friendly, if we describe in the methods the different tests and How / when they were applied."

My new comment is: I agree with the authors to say that adding the applied test for all p-values can make the text less readable. However in the text and tables, I found only 3 p-values: 2 p.8 (Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test) and 1 for the Spearman correlation coefficient (p. 10). So my question is: where in the results, were t-test and Chi squared test applied?
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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I am able to assess the statistics

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