Reviewer’s report

Title: Nutritional Status of In-School Children and its associated factors in Denkyembour District, Eastern Region, Ghana: Comparing Schools with Feeding and Non-School Feeding Policies

Version: 0 Date: 30 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Edem Tette

Reviewer's report:

Nutrition Journal

Title: Prevalence of malnutrition and its associated risk factors among School Aged Children in Denkyembour District, Ghana; comparison of feeding and non-feeding schools.

Date: 29.06.2017

Version 1

Reviewer: Dr Edem Tette

General comments:

Nutrition in childhood is currently a topical issue. This paper is about the school feeding programme in Ghana, one of the interventions for improving nutrition status in children. These findings are useful to researchers and policy makers who work in the field.

Major corrections:

1. Title: "comparison of feeding and non-feeding schools" can be misinterpreted so suggest rephrase.

2. Abstract

Page 2 line 45-50: Conclusion - since it cannot be said with certainty that these effects were caused by the school feeding programme these findings need to be restated with more caution.

3. Background: Is there information on the general prevalence and trends of malnutrition in children in the district?

4. Methods:
5. More information on level of poverty among districts in the area and criteria for selection of schools for the school feeding programme will be useful baseline information.

6. Separate section on the study design and duration of the study is needed.

7. Who were the respondents, were they the parents? It will read better if captured as a subheading, study population

8. Page 3 Line 50: What kind of data was collected by the face to face interviews?

9. Page 5 lines 52-54. What make of instruments were used for the measurements?

10. Briefly outline the classifications or cut-offs you used to determine wasting, stunting, thinness and overweight and provide more detail on how the measurements obtained e.g. BMI, was it calculated manually or a software was used?

Results

11. Table 1 is rather long. Check the alignment of your figures again. The number of Muslims is more than the number of Christians, though the 2010 census reported 80.3% Christians to 11.5% Muslims in the district so kindly check the analysis again.

12. Page 9 line 26: I note that there were no obese children was that the case?

13. More information is needed on the multiple regression model

Discussion section:

14. Page 11 line 22-24: As you pointed out, the study is not robust enough to assess impact well therefore you do not need to mention it here.

15. Page 11 line 38-42: What about poverty levels within the district, could they have contributed to the finding?

16. Page 12 line 13: it might be better to suggest that it could be a reflection of the nutrition transition rather than say it demonstrates a state of nutrition transition.

17. Page 12 line 18-33: It needs to be clear that this is a speculation and not conclusive evidence since a child's starting nutritional status may have improved after joining the school and the nutritional programme and still be appear malnourished if the child was very malnourished to begin with as this study has not been designed to detect this.
18. Page 12 line 31: Could this be a reflection of poverty in the district or the criteria for choosing schools for the school feeding programme?

19. Page 12 line 54 - page 13 line 1: it could also be affected by excessive calories from carbohydrate intake so rephrase.

20. Page 12 34-50. You could provide more detail on how these challenges are affecting the operation of the programme and nutritional status.

21. To use more references from journal articles in the discussion

Limitations

22. On causality you may also look at the Bradford Hill criterion for causation

23. There may be other limitations such as, not knowing the effect of challenges facing the programme such as missed and regularity of meals etc.

Conclusion:

24. The conclusion is not supported by the objective of the study and a more robust design is required to arrive at the conclusions you have drawn.

Minor Essential Corrections:


26. Page 11 line 46: gendre - did you mean "cadre"

27. Page13 line 1: subsequently -perhaps can be changed to "consequently"

28. Some copy editing needed

Discretionary corrections:

29. Page 2 line 9: Ameliorate -perhaps could be changed to improve?

30. Page 3 line 5: Implications -perhaps problems would be a better word

31. Page 3 line 27-30: suggest you remove "and" to read as "as well as increasing the risk…"
32. Page 3 line 49: suggest you remove "the" before national-scale.

33. Page 6 line 35: suggest you remove "too" before tall and to read "…of tall stature"

34. Page 11 line 26, 27: perhaps you could replace "in regards"?

35. Page 11 line 29: perhaps "in" can be changed to "of"?

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Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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