Author’s response to reviews

Title: The reliability of the General Functioning Scale in Norwegian 13-15-year-old adolescents and association with family dinner frequency.

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor,

Thank you for the opportunity to resubmit our manuscript and for the useful comments provided. A revised version of the manuscript "The reliability of the General Functioning Scale in Norwegian 13-15-year-old adolescents and association with family dinner frequency" (NUTJ-D-18-00299R1) is resubmitted. Changes made in the manuscript have been highlighted in yellow. In this revision we have taken into account the comments made by the reviewer. We have listed a point-by-point reply to each of the reviewer’s remarks and changes made in the text below.

Yours sincerely,

Solveig ES Hausken

Response to the reviewer’s comments (reviewers comments first):

Reviewer #2: This study has explored the reliability of the General Functioning Scale and assess the association between family functioning and the family dinner frequency. It has been shown a high internal consistency and an excellent test-retest reliability of the GFS. They have also highlighted that a poor family functioning is related to less frequent family dinner. This study is of interest in its field and I only have a few comments.
We want to thank the reviewer for the nice summary.

Introduction

Line 90: is the GFS a validated questionnaire (internal and external validation)? Please add more detail about the questionnaire.

- We did not include a validation study of the scale, but others (e.g. Byles et al., 1988 and Miller et al., 1985) have validated the GFS scale as referred to in line 131 and 132. Byles et al (1988) reported the scale to have good construct validity, whereas Miller et al (1985) provided good evidence for concurrent and discriminative validity of the scale.

We have added more information in the manuscript about two more recent studies that have explored the GFS among Chinese and Armenian adolescents (Kazaraian, 2010; Shek, 2001). In addition to reliability and validity testing of the GFS, these two studies also supports the cultural appropriateness of the scale (line 132 - 1.39).

Methods

Line 104: how the participants of the test-retest study were chosen (the 204 among the 440 included)?

- For practical reasons the retest was conducted among pupils in only one of the schools participating. We have added this information in the manuscript, line 105-106.

Discussion

Line 207: the cross-sectional design of the study is a limitation, but how evaluate the influence of family functioning on frequency of family dinner using a prospective design?

- If this was a prospective design, we would involve measurements of both family functioning and family dinner frequency at two or more points in time, and thus reveal possible changes in the associations between the variables over a time span – e.g. before, under and after an intervention aiming to increase family functioning. This might help strengthening the arguments for a causal association between the variables - e.g. if the aim of the study was to test the hypothesis that family functioning influences family dinner frequency.

Line 201: the social desirability bias could underestimate or overestimate the association between family functioning and frequency of family dinner?

- Many studies relaying on self-report survey data, like our study, have the potential of social desirability bias, as mentioned under “limitation” line 213-214. Due to systematic biases (e.g.
social desirability bias), correlations between family functioning and frequency of family dinner may have been overestimated or underestimated. One weakness of the present study (and most other studies relying on self-reported data) is that this potential bias is not accounted for by including a social desirability scale that may indicate the degree of concern for social approval among respondents.

Line 211: why data were not collected at the parental level? It is a short and quick questionnaire.

- We did include parents in the whole study, both mothers and fathers. However, this article focus on adolescents’ perspectives, therefore we did not include parental data here.

Table 2: There is an error in numbers of « dinner time together with parent(s) (%) » because 22.3 + 72.3 = 94.6% and not 100%

- We thank the reviewer for the comment. This has been corrected.

Table 3: Don't use the term « multivariate » because it is adapted when you have several dependent variables such as frequency of family dinner. The term « multivariable » is adapted when you have several independent variables (which is the case in the table 3).

- We thank the reviewer for the comment. This has been corrected to “multivariable”.