Author’s response to reviews

Title: Neurocognitive impact of metal exposure and social stressors among schoolchildren in Taranto, Italy.

Version: 2 Date: 14 Jun 2019

Reviewer: Monica Lopez-Vicente

Reviewer's report:

Comment 33:

In the text, the reference category used is high SES, while the reference category is low SES when the results are quantitatively presented, please be consistent. Also, why you only show the percentages of change and ranges of 3 of the 4 outcomes?

Comment 38:

"Further analysis was performed adding in the model the interaction term between the SES and each biomarker, and adjusting for all the covariates age, sex, maternal SPM, HOME total score, and distance from the point source (table 6)." Table 6 only shows the results of one biomarker.

"BPb showed a negative significant association with GAI, CPI and WMI in the lowest SES level." Again, not consistent with the reference category used in table 6, and also, the association with GAI was not observed.

Abstract:

"The lowest socio-economic status showed about five points intellectual quotient less than the highest level on average (β 4.8; 95% CI 0.3, 9.6)" Direction of the association not consistently presented. The authors should check the entire manuscript and fix these inconsistencies.

Comment 41:

"Significant associations resulted between some of the CANTAB scores and BPb and HMn, with a lower proportion of successful stops and higher stop signal reaction time in the SST tests at increasing BPb, and higher between errors in the SWM tests at increasing HMn." Add "levels" after the name of the biomarkers.
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