Author’s response to reviews

Title: Developing content for national population health surveys: an example using a newly developed sedentary behaviour module

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Author’s response to reviews:

Thank you for your comprehensive review of this manuscript. Please find enclosed the revised version of manuscript AOPH-D-19-00147, following receipt of the feedback provided by your reviewers. The reviewers raised some interesting points regarding the objectives of the paper and feel that they have helped to strengthen the paper and improve its readability and focus. Please note we have also changed the title of the paper.

All changes have been made using the ‘track changes’ function in MS Word. Please find below our strategies for addressing their concerns in the revised manuscript. We hope that these revisions are acceptable and address the concerns that were raised.
Reviewer 1:

We thank this reviewer for their evaluation of this manuscript and recognition of its merit. We believe his/her commentary and suggestions have further strengthened our manuscript and we are hopeful that we have adequately addressed them all.

Comment 1: What new information can a reader gain by reading the manuscript? What novel information is presented in the manuscript?

Response 1: We thank the reviewer for this comment. It was our objective to outline the development process of a new survey module addressing an emerging area (sedentary behaviour) for use in a national survey. We have been unable to identify any other published papers which describe the development process of national survey content beyond describing survey sampling design, validation processes and the measures themselves. We feel, therefore, that this is a novel addition to the literature. It provides insight into how survey content is established and changed, which is rarely described. It is also likely particularly useful for lower-income countries, which may not have established survey content design practices. We have added this information on lines 142-147.

Comment 2: I am unsure about the title of the manuscript. The authors describe a methodology question and framework with no relation to space research and yet the title is about space station experiments. The title is highly misleading.

Response 2: We had used a metaphor in the title to refer to the tight quarters on a space station and the meticulous nature of preparing experiments that are not dissimilar to issues faced when designing survey content. We can appreciate, however, that it was not entirely clear upon initial reading. We have, therefore, suggested an alternate title change: “Developing content for national population health surveys: an example using a newly developed sedentary behaviour module”.
Comment 3: Are there other tools already established to measure or examine sedentary activity in a qualitative way?

Response 3: Yes, there are tools already established to measure or examine sedentary activity in a qualitative way. However, given the objective of this paper is to describe the process by which experts conducted a systematic review of the literature to identify the most valid and reliable tools available, we do not feel that it is necessary to describe each of these available tools. This information informed the development of the ISAT tool. This process is part of survey design best practices.

Reviewer 2:

We thank this reviewer for their careful review of this manuscript and appreciate their recognition of its value. We believe their commentary and suggestions have further strengthened our manuscript and we are hopeful that we have adequately addressed them all.

Comment 1: …The authors should opt either to describe the process of developing modules for surveys (in which the added value of the process of developing the sedentary behaviour module is stressed) or to provide more details on the development of the content of the module (based on literature review, conceptual development, cognitive testing, field testing…).

Response 1: We thank the reviewer for this comment. We believe that the objective of this paper is to both describe the development process of modules for surveys (using the sedentary behaviour module as an example), as well as the details of content of the module. We have provided both of these important types of information. We also make reference to the ISAT development paper which describes the process of the module’s development. This is described on page 8 and 9.

Comment 2: Line 38, typo: results instead of resuts

Response 2: This has been amended.

Comment 3: line 109: I do not quite grip why the physical activity guidelines are so detailed here. For what purpose?

Response 3: We have now removed the detailed physical activity guideline information.
Comment 4: Line 151: “Survey content is reviewed as needed…” What is the purpose of this phrase?

Response 4: We have now removed this phrase.

Comment 5: page 8, line 178: It’s nice to know that the authors have created an inventory of sedentary behaviour questionnaires, but to what extent does this fit the framework of the manuscript?

Response 5: We had initially thought to include this in case someone was interested, but given that the main objective of this paper is to outline the module development process, we have removed the reference to the inventory of sedentary behaviour questionnaires.

Comment 6: Line 186” What is the usefulness to refer to table 1 (‘Sample of suggested survey design best practices’)?

Response 6: We thank the reviewer for this comment, but feel that it is important to provide readers with some examples of best practices employed in survey content development in Canada. Others may find this of benefit when replicating the process.

Comment 7: Page 10, line 214: the “results” described here are results of qualitative testing, so the main focus in this manuscript is not on the process of developing a survey module, but on the qualitative testing of the module?

Response 7: We agree with the reviewer that placing the qualitative results under this heading may have been misleading. We had attempted to format a non-traditional paper using the required traditional format requested by the journal. We hope that our amended Methods and Results sections have helped improve readability and clarify the objective of the paper.

Comment 8: Page 11, line 238: the limitations mentioned here not limitations related to the process, but to the content of the module (e.g., the need to have a short module has not much to do with the process of developing the module).

Response 8: We agree re: limitations. We have reformatted the Discussion section and now only identify the lack of validation as a limitation to the development process.
Comment 9: page 13, line 276: I do not understand the purpose/usefulness of Figure 1 (which has no title, nor source).

Response 9: Figure 1 provides the process framework for the development of content on national health surveys. The title appears in the Figure Legend on Page 16.

We have attempted to answer all of the reviewers’ concerns and are hopeful that the subsequent changes we have made are acceptable. We are pleased to resubmit the revised version of this manuscript.