Author’s response to reviews

Title: Prevalence of depression and its associated sociodemographic factors among Iranian Female Adolescents in Secondary Schools

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Author’s response to reviews:

We thank all the Reviewers for their valuable feedback and taking the time to provide useful comments to improve our manuscript entitled “Prevalence of depression and its associated sociodemographic factors among Iranian Female Adolescents in Secondary Schools”.

Based on the constructive comments the following changes have been made:
It is necessary to explain that the corrections considered by honorable reviewers specified with the yellow highlight in the text of the manuscript.

Response to Reviewer 1 – Dr Raul Navarro:

Comment in the background:

1. I think that the paper did not set up a convincing delineation of the incremental contribution the study makes to the extant empirical literature. I am not saying there isn't one there (indeed I think there is), but just that it needs to be more clearly articulated. For example, although the research problem is informed by a review of the relevant empirical work, the critical issues are that the paper is not clear about the underpinning theoretical stance.

Response: Thanks for the valuable comments of the reviewers that helped to improve the details of the study. The explanations were added to the conclusion section lines 368-375, page 15. Also, for the theoretical stance, the relevant explanation was provided in the background section.

2. Authors should also explain why they focus only on female students. They argued that previous studies have only focus on male students but authors need a rationale to not focus on female and male student and compare both sexes.

Response: To answer this comment, explanations were provided at the end of the background section, lines 94-101, page 4.

3. Literature review in the introduction is limited and also is limited in the discussion section. For example, authors have not reviewed studies about the association between depression and potential risk factors. Introduction should have a similar length that discussion, including a deeper literature review.

Response: The brief results of previous studies on the socio demographic causes of depression in adolescents were added to the background section, lines 67-71, page 3.

4. The objectives of the research need to be more clearly specified in the background section.

Response: Thanks for the comments by the reviewer, the research objectives as 3 general objectives were added to the background section lines 102-106, page 4.
5. Indeed, the background should end with clearly articulated expectations (hypotheses) that advance current knowledge and that drive the data analysis. Hypothesis should also be framed in theoretical and empirical background. Authors should explained in what information are based each hypothesis.

Response: Study hypotheses were added to the end of the background section lines 107-115 page 5.

Comments in Methods:

1. Participants: This section should be rewrite to improve readers understanding. In my opinion, author/s should include a discussion of the desired sample based on a power analysis, then the procedure used (i.e., who was contacted about participation), and finally the number of participants who were involved in the study. The final sample should be included in the sample description and not in the results section. How many times did employ participants to complete the questionnaire? Did this happen during class time? Given the sensitivity of the questions how was anonymity and confidentiality conveyed and ensured? How long did the data collection process take overall? Were some of the questionnaires excluded for some reason? Where the interviews took place?

Response: All required items were added to the participants’ section and were highlighted using yellow colors line122-124, page 6 and 150-160 pages 6&7.

2. The final sample should be included in the sample description and not in the results section.

Response: We have deleted related clause from the result section.

Comments in the Discussion:

1. Discussion is difficult to follow. The inclusion of hypothesis and subsections according to the hypothesis will improve the reading experience.

Response: Thanks for the reviewer comments, based on the hypotheses in the introduction section, the discussion section was divided into three sections. The first part was the prevalence of depression among female students, the second part was the relationship between the incidence of depression and the family characteristic of female students, and the third part was the relationship between the incidence of depression and individual characteristics of female students.
2. Authors should explain more clearly the practical implications of their study.

Response: The practical implications of the study were added to the conclusion section line 361-368 page 15.

3. Given the cross-sectional nature of the study, language should be reviewed to avoid causal explanations.

Response: The language of discussion was revised.

Response to reviewer2:

Comment on Background:

1. I feel that the author(s) did not provide justification for the research. The rationale should stem from the outcome of the literature review in the Background section. For instance, it is not clear to me why the focus was on female students only? It is true that girls can experience higher rates of depression compared with boys in adolescence, but the difference is not so important to exclude male participants.

Response: Thanks for the reviewer comment; to answer this comment, explanations were provided at the end of the background section, lines 94-101, page 4.

2. Another example is that each of the probable risk factors associated with depression are not even mentioned in the Background section. It is important to explain why it is crucial the assessment of those specific risk factors. In brief, it is important to provide the context and set the stage for the aims of the study in such a way as to show its necessity and importance.

Response: The brief results of previous studies on the socio demographic causes of depression in adolescents were added to the background section, lines 67-71, page 3. The aim of study explained in line 102-106, page 4. The necessity and importance of study explained in background section line 88-91, page 4.

3. In the abstract it reads "Depression as an important health problem is totally unknown among adolescents in Iranian society." Do you have any data that support this statement? Some research on depression has been carried out among adolescents in Iranian society.
Response: Thanks for the reviewer comment; the related sentence was deleted from the abstract section and the following sentence was added:

Across the globe, depression is a common psychiatric disorder and is the main cause of disability among adolescents.

Comment on Method:

1. It is important to provide information on the internal consistency of the CES-D for the current study.

Response: Internal consistency of the CES-D in the current study was explained in the Method section line 189-190, page 8.

2. A Statistical analysis subsection may be added.

Response: A Statistical analysis subsection was added in the end of Method section line 191-195, page 8.

Comments on Result;

1. That half of the sample is affected by severe depression is difficult to believe. I think it is better to repeat the analysis.

Response: Thanks for the reviewer comments, the statistical analysis was checked by Dr. Soltanian, the statistical supervisor of this article. The results were similar to those previously reported. Descriptions of the possible causes of high prevalence of severe depression in female adolescents in Hamadan city were explained in the discussion section line 245-267, page 10&11. It was referred to the results of studies conducted in Iran with similar results to the present study.

2. Mean, standard deviation, range of CES-D scores are missing.

Response: Mean, standard deviation was explained in line206-207, page8 and range of CES-D scores were explained in line 177-178, page 7.

3. Did the author(s) take into account missing data in the CES-D? Usually, if more than four questions are missing answers, the score of the CES-D questionnaire is not considered valid.
Moreover, it says that "Each items were scored from 0 to 3 on the basis of 'how often have you felt this way during the past week', 0 - rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day), 1 - some or a little of 130 the time (1 - 2 days), 2 - occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3 - 4 days), and 3 - most or all of the time (5 - 7 days)." However, the CES-D includes positive questions: the scoring is exactly the same except that it is reversed: "Most or all of the time" is scored 0 points, "Rarely or none of the time" is scored 3 points, etc.

Response: The statement about missing data explained in Method section, line 150-152, page 6. And the statement about of recoding negative statements (4, 8, 12 and 16) of CES-D questionnaire were added in Method section, line174-175, page 7.

Comments on Discussion:

1. Theoretical and practical implications of the study findings were not satisfactorily addressed.

Response: Theoretical and practical implications of the present study explained in conclusion section line 368-375 page15