Author’s response to reviews

Title: Determinants of Malnutrition among Pregnant and Lactating Women under Humanitarian Setting in Ethiopia

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Author’s response to reviews:

Response to comments from reviewers and editor

Dear Editor-in-Chief and Reviewers;

BMC-Nutrition-Review Journal

We have made substantial revision based on the comments that we receive from the reviewers in thought. The comments are well entertained and addressed in the revised manuscript entitled on “Determinants of Malnutrition among Pregnant and Lactating Women under Humanitarian Setting in Ethiopia”

General:

The paper provides the evidence about the relationship between support mechanism and undernutrition in pregnant and lactating women. More specifically, this signifies the importance of cash and other support to improve nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women in the humanitarian setting in low-resource setting. However, there are some improvements needed for methodological clarity and further data analysis to provide the justification of conclusion.
Specific

1. Targeted Supplementary feeding (TSF): spell out in abstract

Response: It is a nice comment and amended in the current versions.

2. Measurement:

• Do you have information about height and weight? If then, please show the results of Body Mass Index (BMI) in descriptive and regression analysis

Response: It is a good observation. In emergency nutrition set up, we did not use height and weight. It is only recommend using MUAC even the national and international guideline.

• Do you have information about household food insecurity, and morbidity status, use of health services that can influence the nutritional status of PLW. If there is, consider for adjusting those factors in final analysis

Response: It is a nice comment and we are adjusting with available variables.

3. Data analysis

• Please show descriptive analysis, chi square test, and t-test to describe the difference between groups

Response: It is a good comment. The detail of the analysis and consideration is given in the revised version of the manuscript.

• Please mention the variables that you have controlled with justification, and mention what models you have performed for data analysis
The variables included were Age of mothers/caretakers, mothers education status, mothers marital status, mothers Occupation, annual income of the household, attending antenatal care in the health facility, In the last 3 months, which type of assistance you or any member of your household Received, did anyone in the family receive TSF food rations in the last six month, and did anyone in the family receive safety net food rations in the last six months.

• The reporting of results: 49% [AOR=0.51, 95 %= (0.34-0.76)] change it to (AOR: 0.51; 95% CI: 0.34-0.76)

Response: Good observation and amended accordingly.

• In table: please consider revising p value 000, it should be <0.001

Response: Well taken comment and revised.

• Change odd to odds

Response: accepted comment and revised.

• Provide details of model and controlled variables in footnote

Response: It is a good comment and amended accordingly.

4. Discussion and conclusions

• Please mention the reason behind the negative association between TSF and nutritional status of PLW

Response: It is a good feedback and revised in the current versions.
Editor Comments:

BMC Nutrition operates a policy of open peer review, which means that you will be able to see the names of the reviewers who provided the reports via the online peer review system. We encourage you to also view the reports there, via the action links on the left-hand side of the page, to see the names of the reviewers.

Reviewer reports:

CR Sudfeld (Reviewer 1): This study presents findings from a cross-sectional study examining nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women (PLW) in Rayitu District, Ethiopia. This article adds to existing literature that malnutrition is common in humanitarian settings and that ANC and cash transfers may improve nutritional status of PLW. The manuscript presents qualitative and quantitative data, but the link between the two is weak. The data analysis also needs improvement and there are strong suggestions of statistical errors. The construction of multivariate models also needs significant improvement and I offer some suggestions below but consulting a statistician is advised.

Major

1. Most readers will not be familiar with the Rayitu district or its humanitarian response. Please add description of setting and humanitarian efforts to the setting section. Please also add what humanitarian assistance programs were ongoing at the time.

Response: It a nice comments forwarded by the reviewer. We have added some the basic information of the study setting in the current version.
2. The results section says over 22% of pregnant and lactating women were >46 years of age. This is not possible. Please check you data.

Response: Thanks for the observation and it is a typographical error and amended.

3. Methods and Results: The methods for multivariate analyses are not clear. Which variables were included in the multivariate analysis? Why are all variables in Table 2 not in the analysis? Are Age, marital factors, and other variables in Table 1 but not Table 2 also in the multivariate model? I would suggest all variables in T1 and T2 (except those with low variability religion and ethnicity) be included in multivariate models.

Response: Well taken comment. We include the following variables: Age of mothers/caretakers, mothers education status, mothers marital status, mothers Occupation, annual income of the household, attending antenatal care in the health facility, In the last 3 months, which type of assistance you or any member of your household Received, did anyone in the family receive TSF food rations in the last six month, and did anyone in the family receive safety net food rations in the last six months.

4. The % with MUAC <21cm may differ for pregnant vs lactating women. Please add % of pregnant and lactating women in the sample to Table 1. Please also add pregnancy vs lactation as predictor in Table 2 analysis.

Response: It is a good comment and added as requested.
5. In Figure 3, you show age is a determinant of malnutrition. Why is age not in Table 2 as a predictor? There is also no reference to Figure 1 in the text.

Response: its good observations. However, there is no figure 3 in our paper but we added a statement in the main body under result section for figure 1.

6. There is disconnecting between the qualitative and quantitative analysis. The qualitative data presented focused on food consumption but there are no variables on food consumption in the quantitative analysis. The quantitative analysis focuses on ANC, food assistance, and cash transfers, but there is no qualitative data on this. As a result, the qualitative data seems out of place and does not add much information. Is there more data to link qualitative and quantitative findings?

Response: it is a good feedback and we are agreed to remove the qualitative part.

7. Was there any missing data in the analysis? How was it handled?

Response: there is no as such missing data or element while undertaking this survey.

Minor

1. Abstract: "TSF" abbreviation is not defined. Please write out.

Response: noticed and revised accordingly.

2. Abstract: It says women who did not attend antenatal care had lower risk of malnutrition. This does not match the results, it's the opposite.

Response: We have amended the comment in the revised manuscript.
3. Introduction: "Conversely" means the opposite. This is not an appropriate word for this sentence.

Response: well taken comment and revised

4. Introduction Paragraph 1: Can you define "chronic energy deficiency"?

5. Discussion. How does your findings compare to that in other humanitarian studies? Is the % malnutrition similar? Are predictors similar? It is not clear how this study adds value.

Response: well taken comment. There are some pocket studies in other countries but this one is the first of its kind on assessing nutrition status of PLW in emergency setting in the country.

Khem Pokhrel (Reviewer 2): Please include all comments for the authors in this box rather than uploading your report as an attachment. Please only upload as attachments annotated versions of manuscripts, graphs, supporting materials or other aspects of your report which cannot be included in a text format.

Please overwrite this text when adding your comments to the authors.

Response: it is accommodated in the revised versions of the manuscript.

Kindest regards,