Reviewer’s report

Title: Dietary zinc intake and its determinants among Ethiopian children 6-35 months of age

Version: 0 Date: 26 Feb 2018

Reviewer: Ellen Francis

Reviewer's report:

Overall comments on the manuscript - the abstract, objective, conclusion, and title are not supported by the data presented in the manuscript.

Abstract:

page 3 line 14 - It is stated that the public health concern is stunting, but this isn't addressed in the results or conclusion.

page 3 line 35-45 - In your results it might be worthwhile to include the estimates. I would also suggest making it clear that it is child zinc intake

Background:

page 5 line 7 - not clear on what is believed to be the primary cause of zinc deficiency

Methods:

Overall comments: There is a mention of population weights in the abstract, but they are not discussed in the methods. If they were used it should be clear how the effect on the variance was accounted for (e.g. were tests of significance based on robust variance estimates). For clarity I would reorganize the methods with sub-headings for study population, participant characteristics with some information on how those were defined (e.g. family income), dietary measure, child anthropometric measures and statistical methods.

page 5 line 42 - were the anthropometric measures used to assess nutritional status? Or were they combined with the dietary recall data as an indicator for stunting or poor child growth

page 5 line 45 - the results of the anthropometric measures are not reported in the article

Table 2: no information given on how significance was determined in table 2.
Results:

Overall comments: no mention of stunting or anthropometric measures

Page 6 line 17 - state either higher proportion or provide a test for significance if reporting greater likelihood

Page 6 line 48 - no information on how low zinc is defined or if cut-offs are used.

Figure 1: This figure has no Y or X axis label. It would also be improved with a reference line either clinical cut-off of low zinc or mean intake across all Ethiopia

Table 3: The regression coefficients are missing for a few predictors. Only the p-value is reported. Results are incomplete. A table note is needed for the reader to understand if: 1) the beta is the log of zinc or the transformed zinc concentration value, 2) if each model was ran independently, or if it was a multivariate model, 3) if the data are weighted.

Discussion:

Page 7 line 32: what is child's relationship to the mother? This isn't reported anywhere in the tables and wasn't defined in the methods

Page 7 line 47: Define Zn

Conclusion:

Overall: There is no evidence in the current article to support that zinc is a risk factor for stunting. Line 28 page 8 - there is no data in this manuscript to support the association between growth and zinc intake. There is also no data on the prevalence of stunting or the prevalence of low zinc intake (because this was not defined).

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown? 
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review? 
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English 
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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