Author’s response to reviews

Title: Current status of education and research on public health nutrition in Japan: comparison with South Korea, Taiwan, and Mainland China

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Author’s response to reviews:

Response to reviewers' comments for manuscript ID NUTN-D-18-00188 titled “Current status of education and research on public health nutrition in Japan: comparison with South Korea, Taiwan, and Mainland China”.

Thank you very much for the careful and comprehensive review of our manuscript. In response to the comments and recommendations, we have revised our manuscript and answered the questions in a point-by-point fashion, as shown below.

Response to Reviewer #1

Comment: The methodology has too many limitation which have been very aptly described by the authors and therefore the findings may not be true representation of the actual situation

Response: We totally agree on your comment. We considered that this study shows preliminary findings of current status of education and research on public health nutrition. We have made the following revision in the Conclusions section.

“This study provided preliminary information on the current status of education and research of PHN in Japan compared to that in South Korea, Taiwan, and China.” (Line 285-286 in the revised manuscript)
Thank you for the comment.

Response to Reviewer #2

Comment 1: The manuscript is a well written.

Response: Thank you for the comment.

Comment 2: Method: you mentioned how published articles and universities were searched, but no information about hospitals. In your result the findings talk about hospitals. Better to add more about hospital selection.

Response: We understand your question and suggestion. Hospitals were not systematically selected contrast to the method used for the selection of colleges and universities. They appeared as a result of the survey of research institutions. The process of the survey of research institutions has been mentioned in the line 114-132 already in the previous manuscript as below.

First, we identified articles published in Public Health Nutrition from 2007 to 2016 through PubMed. Second, we examined affiliated institutions of the first and corresponding authors who belonged to a domestic institution of the respective country or region. Third, we classified affiliated institutions into (1) educational institution with a PHN program, (2) educational institution without a PHN program, (3) hospital, (4) research institute, or (5) other institution.

Comment 3: Discussion: Rather than putting a single finding and discussing this finding, I recommend to put the major findings together in the first paragraph and then discuss these major findings.

Response: According to the comment, we have revised the first paragraph in the Discussion section.

“In this study, we found that the dominant field of education of PHN programs was different among Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China. Japan had by far the largest number of PHN programs, whereas the number of PHN-related articles per PHN program was lowest in Japan.” (Line 182-184 in the revised manuscript)

Comment 4: You have mentioned many limitations of your study and you need to put the strength of your study and how you tried to minimize the limitations.

Response: According to the comment, we have added the following paragraph in the Discussion section.
“The major strength of this study was its cross-country comparison of education and research activities in the field of PHN in East Asia. Our results provide fundamental information to understand the current status of education and research of PHN in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China. Moreover, this survey was designed and conducted by researchers familiar with the language and education system of each country and region, in such a way that a systematic investigation would be performed in a unified manner as possible.” (Line 254-259 in the revised manuscript)

Based on this revision, the following revision has been made in the Discussion section and author’s contribution.

“Several limitations of this study should also be acknowledged.” (Line 260 in the revised manuscript)

“N.S. contributed to the concept and design of the survey, collected and analyzed the data, drafted the first draft of the manuscript, and prepared the revised version of the manuscript. H.W., X.Y., T.L., and K.A., contributed to the design of the survey, collected and analyzed the data, and assisted in writing and editing the first draft of the manuscript. S.K. contributed to the design of the survey and assisted in writing and editing the first draft of the manuscript, and S.S. contributed to the concept and design of the survey, provided critical input to the final draft of the manuscript, and contributed to the preparation of the revised version of the manuscript.” (Line 324-331 in the revised manuscript)

Comment 5: Conclusion: is almost similar with your findings. Better to rewrite

Response: According to the comment, the conclusion has been revised as follows.

“This study provided preliminary information on the current status of education and research of PHN in Japan compared to that in South Korea, Taiwan, and China. Japan had much larger number of departments with PHN and fewer publications in the field of PHN compared with those in the neighboring countries. For the development of PHN, the quality of education and research environment may deserve further investigation.” (Line 285-289 in the revised manuscript)

List of modifications

Discussion

“In this study, we found that although Japan had by far the largest number of PHN programs, it had the lowest number of PHN-related articles per PHN program.” (Line 182-183 in the previous manuscript)

has been changed to
“In this study, we found that the dominant field of education of PHN programs was different among Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China. Japan had by far the largest number of PHN programs, whereas the number of PHN-related articles per PHN program was lowest in Japan.” (Line 182-184 in the revised manuscript)

“The major strength of this study was its cross-country comparison of education and research activities in the field of PHN in East Asia. Our results provide fundamental information to understand the current status of education and research of PHN in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China. Moreover, this survey was designed and conducted by researchers familiar with the language and education system of each country and region, in such a way that a systematic investigation would be performed in a unified manner as possible.” (Line 254-259 in the revised manuscript)

has been added.

“Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged.” (Line 253 in the previous manuscript)

has been changed to

“Several limitations of this study should also be acknowledged.” (Line 260 in the revised manuscript)

Conclusions

“In conclusion, we compared the current status of education and research of PHN in Japan with those in South Korea, Taiwan, and China. Although Japan had much larger number of departments with PHN as a compulsory subject, the number of PHN-related articles per PHN program in Japan was less than those in the other countries. This suggests that current university education may not lead to active PHN research in Japan. The quality of education and research environment of PHN may deserve further investigation.” (Line 278-283 in the previous manuscript)

has been changed to

“This study provided preliminary information on the current status of education and research of PHN in Japan compared to that in South Korea, Taiwan, and China. Japan had much larger number of departments with PHN and fewer publications in the field of PHN compared with those in the neighboring countries. For the development of PHN, the quality of education and research environment may deserve further investigation.” (Line 285-289 in the revised manuscript)

Authors' contributions
“N.S. collected and analyzed the data and drafted this manuscript. H.W., X.Y., T.L., and K.A., collected and analyzed the data and assisted in writing and editing the manuscript. S.K. and S.S. assisted in writing and editing the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.” (Line 308-311 in the previous manuscript)

has been changed to

“N.S. contributed to the concept and design of the survey, collected and analyzed the data, drafted the first draft of the manuscript, and prepared the revised version of the manuscript. H.W., X.Y., T.L., and K.A., contributed to the design of the survey, collected and analyzed the data, and assisted in writing and editing the first draft of the manuscript. S.K. contributed to the design of the survey and assisted in writing and editing the first draft of the manuscript, and S.S. contributed to the concept and design of the survey, provided critical input to the final draft of the manuscript, and contributed to the preparation of the revised version of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.” (Line 324-331 in the revised manuscript)