Reviewer’s report

Title: Predictors of undernutrition among the elderly in Sodo zuriya district Wolaita zone, Ethiopia

Version: 0 Date: 08 May 2019

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Reviewer's report:

PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:

OBJECTIVE - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses a testable research question(s) (brief or other article types: is there a clear objective)?
Yes - there is a clear objective

DESIGN - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?
No - there are major issues

EXECUTION - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?
No - there are minor issues

STATISTICS - Is the use of statistics in the manuscript appropriate?
Yes - appropriate statistical analyses have been used in the study

INTERPRETATION - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?
No - there are minor issues

OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL - Is the current version of this work technically sound? If not, can revisions be made to make the work technically sound?
Probably - with minor revisions

PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS: This cross-sectional study examines the prevalence and predictors of undernutrition in an elderly south Ethiopian population. The rationale and study design are fairly simple and clear. However, there are some issues with the methodology. How representative is
the sample of Ethiopia as a whole? How many people were excluded from the study? What about oral health and dental problems as predictors of undernutrition? Did the authors take time of year in which the data were collected into account, or whether participants owned land and grew their own crops? Also, I think the conclusion about loneliness being a target for intervention does not reflect the results appropriately.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:
Abstract
Please check English language used as this sentence does not make sense: "Hence, it is among the major public health burdens the district."
The conclusion mentions loneliness as a target for intervention but the results section has not mentioned this at all. Also, upon further reading, loneliness was not included as an exposure variable in multivariate analysis so this conclusion seems unwarranted.

Introduction
It would be useful if the authors included the date of these estimates i.e. how recent are they?
"Eleven percent of the world population and 5% of Ethiopian population were categorized under elderly population- aged ≥ 60 years"
It is unclear if the following sentence refers to elderly females being the most affected by malnutrition or the elderly and females separately: "Elderly age group and females were more affected by malnutrition than their counter parts"

Methods
The description of the how they derived the sample size needed is unclear. Please can the authors expand on this?
Is there a reference for the Dietary Diversity Score? Has it previously been validated?
The exclusions included "seriously ill" people. How was this defined and measured? Would people with major illness causing weight loss e.g. cancer, heart failure etc, have been excluded?
It is unclear how dietary data were collected. Was this a 24 hour food diary?

Results
How was mild, moderate and severe undernutrition defined?
Discussion
The authors mention that the sample size was smaller than needed. Therefore what was the power of the study?

Figure 1
Is would be useful if the authors could list any acronyms used in the footnote.

Note: This reviewer report can be downloaded - see attached pdf file.
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.

No

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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Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

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