Reviewer’s report

Title: Adolescent food insecurity in rural Sindh, Pakistan: a cross-sectional survey

Version: 0 Date: 04 Jan 2020

Reviewer: Edward Frongillo

Reviewer's report:

1. [line 79] Should be "there are no data" because the word "data" is plural. This needs to be corrected throughout the manuscript.

2. [line 88] A recently published study by Frongillo et al. (2019) should be cited here. The study may be useful for the Discussion section because it discusses reasons for discordance.

3. [lines 93-94] The statement that household FI and adolescent FI have only been studied in Ethiopia is not correct. Bernal included adolescents in her study cited by the authors as did Fram et al. (2013) and Frongillo et al. (2019).

4. [line 156] It should be "Stata" and not "STATA".

5. [line 171] The analyses were "multivariable" and not "multivariate". See https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3518362/ for the distinction. "Multivariable" is used three lines later.

6. [lines 187-189] Results should be written in the past tense throughout the manuscript.

7. [Lines 225-228] Additional literature should be cited here. See the qualitative studies of Bernal et al. (2012) and Fram et al. (2011) and Frongillo et al. (2019) referenced in comment 2 above for possible reasons why adolescent food insecurity is under-reported by adults. Frongillo et al. (2019) has a brief discussion about the myth that adults protect children from food insecurity. This myth arose because the first informants about experiences of food insecurity were mothers, and mothers report according to how they see their role in the family. We now understand that parents are only partially able to protect their children. Furthermore, as the authors note at line 225, even if children are partially protected from reductions in food intake, they are likely not much protected from mechanisms through which food insecurity acts as a stressor (which are the mechanisms that may most harm children).

8. [246-258] This paragraph is useful, but the authors can say more. First, early in the article the issue of discordance between child and adult report of food insecurity was raised. In this Pakistan study, using the numbers reported in Tables 2 and 3, the discordance between households and adolescents was 37% for boys and 8% for girls. The authors should report these percentages either in the Results section (preferred) or here in the
Discussion section. Second, the greater concordance for girls is largely driven by few girls, as the authors noted, reporting food insecurity if the household was food secure. Additional reasons for why girls' food insecurity status may be more tied to the household food insecurity status should be discussed. For example, Nanama and Frongillo (2012) showed in Burkina Faso that rank of women in complex polygamous households was important for their experiences of food insecurity. Younger wives were more tied to the household situation than were older wives who were more autonomous and had more personal resources and so the food insecurity status of younger wives fluctuated more closely with the household food insecurity status. Could it be that girls are more tied to the household situation than boys in Pakistan? Just an idea to consider.

9. [lines 261-262] Here it is claimed that no study compared adolescent and household food insecurity which is not correct. See comment 3 above and the authors' own statement about the study in Ethiopia. The authors are encouraged to forget about trying to claim to be first and instead focus on what this study adds to our knowledge.

10. [lines 277-278] This recommendation is premature and should be modified. Solving food insecurity for children requires a deep understanding of why they are food insecure, which the authors have not provided. Some seemingly appealing solutions may do more harm than good. See the Discussion section of Nanama and Frongillo (2012) and Fram and Frongillo (2018) as examples of discussion of possible harms and benefits. The authors at the end of the Abstract reflect this need for deeper understanding in their last sentence. This last sentence of the Abstract would be an appropriate substitute for the sentence at lines 277-278.

References cited


Frongillo EA, Fram MS, Escobar-Alegria JL, Perez-Garay M, Macauda MM, Billings DL. Concordance and discordance of the knowledge, understanding, and description of children's


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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

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