

Author's response to reviews

Title: Correlates of tobacco cessation counseling among Hispanic physicians in the US: a cross-sectional survey study

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RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS COMMENTS (Revision 2, 12/12/2007)

MS: 3939237111370940 - Predictors of tobacco counseling among Hispanic physicians: a cross-sectional survey study (New title: **Correlates of tobacco cessation counseling among Hispanic physicians in the US: a cross-sectional survey study**)

Dear editor,

We want to thank you and the reviewers for the positive review of our manuscript, and for the final recommendation to accept it for publication in *BMC Public Health*. We have addressed all the recommended minor revisions, (reflecting a minor change on the title), included the name of the institutional ethic review committee which approved the study, updated Dr. Hsu's affiliation and contact information, and edited the entire manuscript one more time to correct any formatting issues. Please find below our point-by-point response to the reviewers' comments.

Reviewer's report. Version: 2-Date: 31 October 2007

Reviewer: Corinne G Husten

COMMENT 1.

Page 10, 1st paragraph, line 2: it appears that the 36% refers to medications, so I suggest using that term rather than "treatment". Counseling, cessation programs, behavior change programs are also treatments.

RESPONSE: We made the change as recommended

COMMENT 2.

Page 10, 1st paragraph, line 4: Please distinguish "behavior change programs" from cessation programs. Cessation programs use behavioral change strategies, so it unclear what the distinction is between these two responses.

RESPONSE: We revised in response to the suggested changes. We reworded the sentence as: "... referred smokers to programs that use behavior change approaches to facilitate smoking cessation"

COMMENT 3

Page 10, paragraph 2, line 1: Explicitly define the measures defined "smoking counseling"? Was it the activities listed in the paragraph that precedes this sentence? Did they have to do any of them to be considered to have provided counseling? In particular, did asking about exposure to SHS constitute counseling?

RESPONSE: Yes, “smoking counseling” refers to the practices described in the previous paragraph. To avoid confusion and be consistent, we reworded the sentence as: “The analysis focused on the factors associated with physicians’ tobacco counseling practices.” As discussed in our previous letter of response, asking about exposure to secondhand smoke is recommended and may constitute an intervention.

COMMENT 4

Page 15, paragraph 2, line 3-4: What does "their effectiveness" refer to? formal program? protocols? While protocols might change physician behavior, I'm not sure how their use of formal programs would change their behavior.

RESPONSE: We revised this paragraph in response to the suggested changes. Actually, the literature reports low use by physicians of evidence-based approaches to tobacco cessation (such as theory-based interventions). Additionally, the literature has consistently pointed to the ineffectiveness of professional /clinical practice guidelines in changing physicians’ practices (mostly because physicians ignore them). We revised the paragraph to clarify these issues.

COMMENT 5

Page 15, paragraph 3, last lines: The definition of Hispanic and how participants reported their ethnicity belongs in the methods section.

RESPONSE: We made the change as recommended (See Methods: Instrument section)

COMMENT 6

Page 16, paragraph 2, line 10: Do you have data on how many Hispanic physicians working in the US are foreign born? The overall number may not apply to specific racial/ethnic groups.

RESPONSE: To the best of our knowledge there is no such data available, which underlines the importance of present study that examine the practice of Hispanic physicians.

COMMENT 7

I would strongly encourage the author to use "correlates" rather than "determinants" throughout the paper since the term "determinants" has a bit of a causal sense to it.

RESPONSE: We made the change as recommended, including the title.

Reviewer: Elaine Puleo

COMMENT 1

One discretionary revision would be to combine Tables 3 and 4.

RESPONSE: The point is well taken, and we considered combining tables 3 and 4. However, we believe that the resulting table may be difficult to interpret for readers with limited understanding of quantitative approaches.

Reviewer: Esteve Fernandez

COMMENT 1

Accept without revision

Reviewer: Peter Leggat

COMMENT 1

The study is only in New Mexico. The title suggests it is a US wide study.

RESPONSE: We believe the title must reflect our focus on this particular professional category: Hispanic physicians in the US. As discussed in "Introduction," this is an important professional group with very limited involvement in research. One of the purposes of this study is to encourage further research with this group of professionals. We also believe that the title must be consistent with our previously published paper on the same study, which refers to Hispanic physicians in general.

COMMENT 2

As mentioned in the previous review, the year of the study should be included in the abstract.

RESPONSE: We made the change as recommended.