Reviewer comments and responses

Reviewer 1

Comment

It is a quite comprehensive summary/review on childhood constipation. The authors analyze the problem in all his aspects and in a quite complete way. Nevertheless the text seems too long and a shorter and simpler version could be useful for a better reading.

Answer

We would like to thank the reviewer for the encouraging comments. The manuscript was significantly shortened according to the comments.

Reviewer 2

Comment

This review is very important. Its great merit is to approach childhood constipation trying to change the paradigm from diagnosis and treatment to prevention, by looking at the risk factors. The authors should be congratulated for that.

Response

We would like to thank the reviewer for the encouraging comments.

Small corrections are outlined in the text (below) in green

In addition, some suggestions are made, as follows:

Comment

The title could be: Childhood Constipation as an **increasing** Public Health Problem

Response

Constipation is not currently recognized as a public health problem. As far as we know no one has highlighted it in this angle. Therefore, we thought it would better if we consider it as an emerging public health problem. Hence, we thought it would be more appropriate to keep the title as it is if the reviewer agrees with us.

Comment

Keywords could be less specific about risk factors, because not all can be listed. The suggestion is: constipation, children, public health, prevention, risk factors

Response

Changed as suggested by the reviewer

Comment

The text could be a bit more concise, avoiding some repetitions.

Response

Text was significantly shortened as suggested by the reviewer

Comment

Important citations could be added for information. About enuresis, O'Regan et al. Clin Nephrol, 1985; AJDC, 1986. About toilet training, Blum et al. Pediatrics 2004; 113: e520-2. Discussion should be changed accordingly.

Response

Reference in our article (by Dehghani SM, et al.) have cited both articles by O'Regan et al. and much more recent. However, the article on Blum et al. on developing constipation around the time of toilet training offered insightful information and was added to the references with appropriate changes in the text.

Comment

The items **Complications** and **Poor Health Related Quality of Life** clearly contemplate the possible psychological disturbances **secondary to** constipation's complications. The question is how much of the '**Psychological co-morbidities**' a**re secondary to constipation.** Should this not be stressed also in this item?

Response

Since we have addressed this in the section "psychological co-morbidities" in detail, we did not include that in this section.

Comment

In **Definitions leading to misunderstandings of childhood FC** it is stated: "In addition, some researchers have used single symptoms such as difficulty in passing stools to define FC in epidemiological surveys[16]. Descriptions of this nature have shown disproportionately higher prevalence of this condition."

This is a very selective statement, since also other surveys depicted a high prevalence and must be considered.

Response

The statement "Description of this nature have shown disproportionately higher prevalence of is condition" was removed.

Comment

Also, one should be more careful about the statement in **Epidemiology**: 'These data seem more reliable as they have used standard definitions (Rome III) compared to previous research which have used very simple defections such as difficulty in passing stools.'

Which data are more reliable has not yet been proved against a gold standard.
Suggestion would be: These data can be compared to the other studies which have used standard definitions (Rome III) in contrast to previous research which have used very simple definitions such as difficulty in passing stools and/or hard, cracked stools.

Response

Corrected as suggested by the reviewer

Comment

It should be added that obesity could **coexist** with constipation due to the same bad 'lifestyle'**.**

Response

Corrected as suggested by the reviewer

Comment

References have to be carefully checked: for instance ref 120 is wrongly cited as appearing in *J Pediatr (Rio J).* 2008;**84**:9-17, and some references are incomplete: 82, 86, 96, 99, 111, 117. Look carefully at spelling errors, like Maxico (ref 37)
Reference 8: there **is a more recent ref** about the same subject.
In addition, 122 references are listed, but only 114 are cited in the text: thus, often the cited number does not correspond to the listed reference.

Response

Reference list was reviewed and corrections were made accordingly. For the reference 8, we added the most recent reference as well.

Reviewer 3

Comment

The paper covers in equilibrate matter all the aspects of the question. I have only some doubts about the relevance of the figures.

Response

Both pictures graphically illustrate what we try to state in the text. The pictures, we thought, will invariably help the reader to grasp and retain the concepts that we are trying to emphasize in this article. Therefore, if the reviewer and the editors agree, we would like to keep these figures in the manuscript.