

December 2, 2014

Dear Editor-in-Chief,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 14797-review.doc).

Title: Hypertension in Zimbabwe: a meta-analysis to quantify its burden and policy implications

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Name of Journal: *World Journal of Meta-analysis*

ESPS Manuscript NO: 14797

Thank you for reviewing our paper and providing such detailed comments. We have completed major revisions to the manuscript and responses to the reviewers' and editors suggested changes are outlined below and highlighted in the manuscript.

The manuscript has been improved according to the suggestions of the editor and reviewers:

1. The format of the paper has been revised and updated.
2. Revision has been made according to the suggestions of the two reviewers:

Reviewer #1:

The author should provide detailed data including statistical analysis in the Methods and Results sections.

Response

We thank the reviewer for their comments. The Methods and Results sections have been expanded to include detailed information on the statistical analysis in the Methods section, and the Results now include the prevalence rates, along with the 95% confidence intervals, heterogeneity results for I^2 and χ^2 and statistical significance.

Introduction is too long. It would be better to cut to ~1-1.5 pages. Do not review the subject extensively.

Response

The introduction has been reduced by over 50% from 832 words to 323 words and the background on hypertension has been reduced to fit in the recommended 1-1.5 pages.

In the abstract-- "The search was restricted to community or population based studies that used either the WHO (BP $\geq 160/95$ mmHg) or the 7th report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure (BP $\geq 140/90$ mmHg)

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criteria.” In the Methods section--“and reported prevalence of hypertension defined as a blood pressure (BP) level **>140/90 mm Hg.**” In the Results section--“One study used **a mean diastolic threshold of >94 mmHg.**”

— How did the authors choose the papers that have been included? Authors should clarify the inclusion criteria of the studies.

Response

The abstract and methods have been rectified to clearly state the cut-off points used for the inclusion criteria for the studies. The Methods section has been re-formatted and expanded to now include ‘Search strategy’, ‘Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion’, ‘Study selection’, ‘Data extraction’ and ‘Statistical analysis’ to clearly explain the process for the systematic review, as well as clarify the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

References should be uniform. The references are in variable format and need to be consistent and in the format required by the Journal.

Response

This reference list has been updated to the format required by the Journal and is now in a uniform and consistent format.

Reviewer #2

This article might be helpful to understand the prevalence of hypertension in Zimbabwe. However, it is just estimation since the diagnostic criteria and research subject characteristics such as age are different. The size of sample seems small in some studies. Therefore, it might be required that a national survey should be performed in the future to further define the prevalence of hypertension.

Response

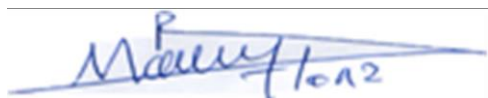
We thank the reviewer for his suggested recommendation and the following sentence has been added: “Our findings suggest that estimating the true prevalence in hypertension in Zimbabwe is a challenge due to methodological differences. Therefore, longitudinal national surveys using standardized methodologies are urgently needed in the future to further define the prevalence of hypertension and depict trends”. We have highlighted the limitations of our study in more details in the Limitations section of the discussion, and addressed the limitations posed by the small number of studies, the sizes of the samples, the lack of age-standardized data provided by the studies and the issues regarding blood pressure measurement.

3. Referencing and typesetting have been updated to meet the requirements of The World Journal of Meta-analysis as suggested by the editor. However, regarding post codes, Zimbabwe does not use any postcodes. The ‘Comments’ section has been added at the end of paper to highlight the main points, as well as the reviewers’ comments on the originally submitted manuscript.

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Thank you again for considering our manuscript in the *World Journal of Meta-analysis*. We look forward to hearing from you

Sincerely yours,



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