

RESPONSE TO REVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Section: research methodology

Query 1: Were all the participants examined within a short period of time? The time duration of data collection would have been informative.

Author's Reply: The timeline for completing the Phase 3 of the study was 3 years (September 2001 to 2004) and this has been added in methods section [Pg 4; para 5].

Query 2: What was the range of HbA1c used? Has HbA1c been included in any diabetes definitions? I do not see this variable described elsewhere in the paper, sorry if I have missed that but what is the purpose of describing this variable in the method section if this information has subsequently not been analysed?

Author's Reply: HbA1c is included in Table 1, and the range of HbA1c is also added as suggested by the reviewer.

Query 3: It is a well-known fact that errors related to anthropometry are not uncommon. There is no description of whether the anthropometry measurements were repeated and the mean taken. Were all 2350 measurements taken by the same person? If not how many persons took these measurements? Were shoes also taken off while taking the weight? Was the spring balance calibrated every day?

Author's Reply: Anthropometry measurements such as waist & hip circumference and blood pressure measurements were repeated and the mean is taken for analysis. Two well-trained interviewers performed all the measurements and the intra and inter observer coefficient is well within normal limits. Subjects were requested to remove their shoes when taking weight measurement and the weighing machine was calibrated against standard weight on a daily basis. These points are now stated in the methods section [Pg 5, para 2, 4].

Query 4: Regarding waist circumference what measures were taken in obese subjects to ensure that the measurement was reliable?

Author's Reply: In obese subjects, the bony landmarks of the last rib margin and the iliac crest were identified and marked and the mid-distance between the two was measured as

the waist circumference. This was repeated and the mean of the two readings were taken as the waist circumference measurement. This is now included in the text in methods section [Pg 5, 3rd line from bottom].

Query 5: Why were two and not three reading of BP taken? Did the same person record all the BP measurements?

Author's Reply: Two BP readings were taken and the mean of two was taken as blood pressure. If the difference between the first and the second reading was >6 mm Hg for systolic BP or >4 mm Hg for diastolic BP, then a third reading was taken. This point is now described in the methods section [Pg 6; line 2]. Yes, the same person recorded all the BP readings.

Query 6: Definition of Low HDL has been omitted in the method section. Is this an oversight?

Author's Reply: We apologize for omitting the definition of low HDL in the method section by oversight. This is now included under definitions section [Pg 6].

Results / Statistical Analysis :

Query 7: A background table with some socio-demographic characteristics is required such as mean age, years of education etc. to give the reader an idea of the nature of this sample.

Author's Reply: As suggested by the reviewer, a table on general characteristics of the study population was included [Table 1].

Query 8: The first para under results should indicate which table or figure this refers to as this is not done.

Author's Reply: The results (para 1 in earlier version changed to para 2 in revised version) were not given in tables or figures, hence were not mentioned in the text of the earlier version. Now this has been included in the Table 2 of the revised version.

Query 9: The figures 1 and 2 are hazy and it is not easy to read the numbers please improve the quality of the diagrams ensuring better resolution. Other than that the figures are interesting and the information presented makes the point aptly.

Author's Reply: As suggested by the reviewer, the figures are now provided in a better resolution.

Query 10: Para 2 under results the third and last sentence are make the same point.

Author's Reply: As pointed out by the reviewer, we have removed the last sentence in the para 2 of the results section.

Query 11: Table 1: As tables should be read independently from the text please indicate the definitions of the metabolic risk factors either as a footnote of the table or in the sub heading.

Author's Reply: As suggested by the reviewer, we have added the definitions of the metabolic risk factors as footnote in Table 2 (Table 1 in earlier version changed to Table 2 in revised version).

Query 12: Given that the WC/BMI varied with age and the age span is rather wide it would have been advisable to adjust the prevalence of obesity and also of cardiovascular factors by age. In addition, C.I would yield more information that just giving the p-values.

Author's Reply: As suggested by the reviewer, we have included the age-standardized prevalence of obesity in the abstract [Pg 1; para 3] and the results section [Pg 8, para 2, line 3]. CI has also been added as suggested by the reviewer.

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