

Peer Review Report

Review Report on Detrimental changes to individual health promoting behaviors among internally displaced Israelis

Original Article, Int. J. Public Health

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EVALUATION

Q 1 Please summarize the main findings of the study.

The study brings data on changes in lifestyle habits a few months after the start of the war between Israel and Palestine. The study draws on two online surveys, the first with over 900 participants and the second with just over 150 participants. The analysis is simple but seems correctly done.

Q 2 Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

While I believe the information is valuable to inform policies to better address the needs of displaced populations in war settings, the study population is very particular and more emphasis should have been given to explaining who is the study population and better contextualise the context of war that this study is set in – which would lead to better both internal and external validity of the study. In addition, after reading the paper multiple times, it is possible to assume based on tables and figures that the authors evaluated changes in lifestyle in two ways. The first one is subjectively based on the first survey (individuals perception of changes from before to the start of the war); and the second seems to have been measured based on differences from the first to the second survey. However, this is not clear in the methods or the results.

Q 3 Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.

Introduction

1. The introduction sets well the scene of the paper but could bring more information if there were incentives (financial or resources) for those families to be displaced. Was that a forced displacement that the families did by themselves or the government relocated them to safer areas?

2. Page 2, row 35: typo in “healthy diet”

Methods

1. The study design should be defined better if the survey was applied to the same people twice. This is not completely clear in the methods.

2. In study population, suggest that the manuscript should clearly state: the nature of the sampling (e.g., convenience sample of those who responded to the questionnaire), and which social media platforms were used to distribute the questionnaire, with more detailed information on how the survey was distributed.

3. Under “pre-war lifestyle characteristics”, it was not defined diet quantity. If that was not evaluated, how did you define changes in variables collected only once?

4. It is needed better information on what a meaningful change in “Likert scale” was defined as this is neither explained or properly referenced in the text. Did the authors categorise the variables into binary and then group them into “fundamental changes in lifestyle”. In this case, if some changed their diet quality from a score of “5” pre-war to a score of “4” during war that would be considered a change from healthy to unhealthy and the same as a score from “9” to “2” for example? Or subjective information if the individual said that changes occurred were used? This is not clear in the methods section.

5. It is not clear when “food group intake frequency” was assessed. Please provide the exact time for it.

6. It is not clear how missing information (i.e., missing data) was dealt with in the multivariable analysis. Also, for comparability, the univariable and multivariable analysis should contain the same set of individuals.
7. Please provide information on the reason for conducting a multivariable analysis and how variables were included in the model (order, reasoning, etc).
8. It would be good to add a before–after analysis for those individuals that you have both information on short and long-term displacement. This analysis could use continuous scores to increase your power to detect associations.

Results

1. In row 105 of the results section it is not clear why someone would be displaced but be “at home”. Are those people with multiple homes or where those homes from family members? Also, what is the difference between “apartments” and “homes”. Are apartments rented places by them or any entity?
2. In table 1:
 - a. Is age normally distributed in the sample? If not, I suggest presenting age in terms of median and interquartile range.
 - b. Why not present an average score of diet quality?
3. In table 2:
 - a. please provide information on when information was collected.
 - b. Please provide the full name for “P” and which trend analysis was performed.
4. In Figures 1 and 2, please insert the number of participants included in each analysis. Also, the results of the univariable and multivariable should contain the same. There is no information on the characteristics of participants who responded during the war. Are the 154 participants who responded to the survey after displacement also answered the questionnaire before or are they different people? If they responded to both questionnaires, how do they differ from those who responded only to the first one?
5. In Figure 3, please revise plots and OR – 95%CI seem very unevenly distributed.
6. Across the figures/tables, please change “pv” for “–p-value” or “p” which is the most common abbreviation.
7. In the multivariable analysis, there is information in the abstract that is different or not present in the main manuscript – e.g., “Staying with young children, and a pre-war healthy lifestyle was protective against a fundamental lifestyle change (OR=0.049, 95%CI 0.28–0.97). In addition, an OR of 0.049 is extremely unlikely and an indicator of overadjustment. Please revise it.
8. In the legend of Figure 3, revise typos.

Discussion

1. It seems a bit decontextualised bringing the following information at the start of the discussion “According to the “Groundswell – Preparing for Internal Climate Migration” World Bank report, without urgent national and global climate action, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America would internally displace more than 140 million people by 2050(19).” And how it links with war migration as they are very distinct.
2. The authors mentioned that lifestyle changes “were stable throughout months from displacement as seen in our second survey, validating the short-term results detected relatively close to displacement.”. What is the proposed mechanism for these changes to happen? If it is via mental health, wouldn’t you expect an even poorer lifestyle after 8–9 months after displacement compared to 3 months of displacement?
3. In the results or discussion, there is no mention of socioeconomic characteristics or factors that might be confounders of the association, or that might have contributed to both the characteristics of displacement and habits.
4. Regarding limitations:
 - a. If public health dieticians also distributed the survey, wouldn’t that be more frequently responded to by individuals who are accessing care for specific diet problems?
 - b. Because the first survey was already done post-war, it is important to mention that the “baseline” of the survey was already affected by it.
5. There is no information on where individuals were coming from/moved to. How potential differences in displacement depending on where you are coming from and how displacement happened could have affected your results?
6. In the discussion there is no mention of possible policies or interventions that could be done in the settings where people are displaced or with displaced populations to reduce the burden of displacement. Is there any policies in place during that time? Or what can you learn from interventions done in other settings?

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4 Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

The title mentions changes to "health promoting behaviours" while the paper assessed "individual health behaviours".

Q 5 Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes

Q 6 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

A revision should be made. There are some sentences a bit hard to read and typos.

Q 7 Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Yes.

Q 8 Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)

Yes

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 9 Originality



Q 10 Rigor



Q 11 Significance to the field



Q 12 Interest to a general audience



Q 13 Quality of the writing



Q 14 Overall scientific quality of the study



REVISION LEVEL

Q 15 Please make a recommendation based on your comments:

Major revisions.