

## Peer Review File

Article information: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/jxym-20-47>.

Reviewer A:

Comment 1: According to the instruction of organizing the structured abstract, the study problem or background should be stated before going to state the objective.

Reply 1: Background stated (please see the main manuscript page no 2, line number 28 to 32) before objectives as per the recommendation.

Changes in the text: Excessive salt intake contributes to increased risk of noncommunicable diseases, which could vary between countries and between population groups within a country. Specific population-based data are necessary to design a pragmatic intervention strategy. The present study was designed to find out the salt intake knowledge, attitudes and behavior among the Bangladeshi undergraduate students.

Comment 2: It will be fine to express the name of the departments that were been reached for targeting the study population, in the line number 84-85.

Reply 2: Name of the department included in the main manuscript (line no 87-91)

Changes in the text: The undergraduate students of all departments (Biochemistry & Molecular Biology; Microbiology and Immunology; Community Nutrition; Health Promotion & Health Education; Reproductive & Child Health; Occupational and Environmental Health; Epidemiology and Biostatistics; Radiology & Imaging Technology; Applied Laboratory Sciences) of Bangladesh University of Health Sciences were considered as the study population.

Comment 3: Need to check the grammar in the line number 113.

Reply 3: thank you. Corrected in the manuscript.

Changes in the text: The amount of added salt intake while taking meal was measured using tea spoon and converted into gram where considering 5 grams in one flat full tea-spoon

Comments 4: Use full stop after the end of bracket in the line number 131 and 134.

Reply 4: thank you. Corrected in the manuscript.

Comment 5: As the other statements of results section are in past tense, it should be synchronized for the line number 136.

Reply 5: thank you. Corrected in the manuscript.

Comments 6: Incomplete sentence in the line number 205-206.

Reply 6: thank you. We have revised whole discussion part as per the recommendation hopefully it will satisfy you.

Comments 7: Need to check the position of used comma (,) in the line number 211.

Reply 7: thank you. Corrected in the manuscript.

Comment 8: Objectives: Perceptions and awareness were not included in the objectives but were assessed. Probably, this is the reason for the insignificant associations between the variables in the results.

Reply 8: True, thanks for good observation.

Comments 9: Methods:

- line 91 starting with "the estimated..." to the end of the sentence is not clear.

Reply 9: The sentence is rephrased. (line 98-99)

Changes in the text: The estimated sample size was 209, considering 64.3% (28) prevalence of salt intake behavior among the undergraduate medical and nonmedical student in Bangladesh.

Comment 10: Weaknesses:

- students from health sciences college creates bias to the study results.
- there is no mention on the insignificance of the results.

Reply 10:

- It might be true but we mentioned this in the limitation part of the discussion of the manuscript. (line number 197-203)
- All the insignificant results also presented in to the tables for better understanding.

Changes in the text: The findings of the study cannot be generalized for all undergraduate students of Bangladesh as this study was conducted among only health sciences students, but we got some idea regarding rest of the students in the Country.

Comment 11: Results:

The data presented were not easy to understand and link together

The paper is not clear and difficult to follow and understand. We advise the authors to re-write the results and discussion again.

Reply 11:

We have revised the results and discussion part as a whole as per your suggestion so that it can be understood easily. Please go through the manuscript.

Reviewer B:

This is a very interesting paper that contains important information. Overall, I found the paper is well prepared but needs minor revisions.

Comment 1: Introduction:

1. The introduction provided a good description of the background information, but the rationale of the study is missing. Please mention why this study had to be undertaken while we already know the prevalence of consuming added salt in the same population (as mentioned in the line 65-66).
2. Please consider rewriting the objective to describe the purpose of the study specifically. From the result of the study, it can be reflected that the purposes were to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice about salt consumption among undergraduate students. Please mention that specifically.

Reply 1: We have revised it as per the instructions (line number 71-76)

Changes in the text: This study has been conducted as a series of dietary salt studies (24,30,31), conducted by the Department of Noncommunicable Diseases of Bangladesh University of Health Sciences (BUHS) in order to assess the salt intake behavior of the BUHS family members to help designing a customized salt reduction strategy. In this study we focused on the undergraduate students of the BUHS to get a clear picture regarding the current salt intake knowledge, attitudes and behavior, in order to promote a healthy dietary behavior among them.

Comment 2: Method:

1. Why the BUHS was chosen as the study settings is not clear from the description of the paragraph (Line 75-84). Please describe the rationale for choosing the setting. Any information regarding the institute that is not relevant to this paper can be omitted.
2. Please provide the reference in the lines 96-98 and 98-100 if available.

Reply 2: we have revised it as per the instruction. (line number 78 -86), reference included

Changes in the text: Study settings: A cross-sectional study was conducted among the undergraduate students of BUHS from January to February, 2019. We chose BUHS purposively as it is only the private health sciences related university in Bangladesh. It is a non-profit private medical university of Bangladesh situated in the north-eastern part of Dhaka city. BUHS can attract students from all walks of life because of relatively low fees. It conducts programs under four faculties for both undergraduate and

postgraduate students in its own campus. The students spend a considerable amount of time in the campus for academic activities. They frequently visit the cafeteria in the campus premise and food junctions in the adjacent areas for breakfast, mid-day snacks and lunch.

Comment 3: The subheadings ‘data collection instrument’, ‘data collection procedure’, and ‘Ascertainment of key variable’ can be presented under a common subheading ‘data collection’. Please consider the journal specific instructions for formatting the section.

Reply 3: We have revised it as per the instruction. (line number 102-119)

Comment 4: The description of the variable is in the subheading ‘Ascertainment of key variables’ is not explicit. Please consider describing the variables group wise, that means describing the variables that the study considered on each of the concepts including knowledge (e.g. perception towards consequence of excess salt consumption, importance of lowering salt consumption), attitude (e.g. perception towards the amount of consuming salt) and practice (e.g. consumption of add salt).

Reply 4: We have revised it as per the instruction. (line number 116-119)

Changes in the text: The key variables were arranged into three groups like, knowledge (e.g. perception towards consequence of excess salt consumption, importance of lowering salt consumption), attitude (e.g. perception towards the amount of consuming salt) and practice (e.g. consumption of add salt).

Comment 5: Consider providing the definition/description of ‘added salt taken during meal’. I think it is an important variable in the study and it is needed to be defined clearly to avoid confusion among readers. Providing a clear definition will allow the reader to compare the finding. I see in the discussion section that the amount of added salt intake was compared with the total salt consumption of samples from other studies (lines 172-176). If the variables are not defined, the comparison can be inappropriate or confusing. Providing a definition would help in this regard. Furthermore, provide how the added salt was measured; mentioned whether the method is a valid and reliable method. If there is any publish articles that provide the validity and reliability of the method, put that as reference. Otherwise, please mention that method has not been validated.

Reply 5: We have included the description of added salt taken during meal in to the manuscript now. (line number 110-112)

Changes in the text: A demonstration was done how to respond for the question on amount of added salt while taking a meal. A flat full spoon was considered to have 5 grams of salt (30)

Comment 6: Result:

1. The results are very interesting and presented in a nice way, particularly the tables. Only consider arranging the descriptions according to the variables (e.g. knowledge, attitude and practice). This will help in flowing the writing in a smooth way.

Reply 6: Thank you very much, we have arranged accordingly.

Comment 7: Discussion:

1. The first paragraph can provide a restatement of the objective and key findings of the study. The line 156-159 is not relevant, can be omitted.
2. Caution should be taken to compare the daily add salt consumption with the total salt consumption, otherwise the statement could be misleading. Consider rewriting the line 172-173. 2.8 g salt was not average dietary intake of salt for the study participant, it is the amount for added salt intake.
3. Line 173: please provide references for 'four times lower than other Asian countries.' The two references (ref# 3 and 25) provided in the line are conducted in Bangladesh. They don't tell about other Asian country. If you are giving secondary reference, please consider appropriate format for reference.

Reply 7: Thank you for your valuable comments and we have revised it as per your instruction. (line number 156-203).

Reviewer C:

Comment 1: The authors aimed to assess the salt intake behavior among the Bangladeshi undergraduates. Unfortunately, the English version is in many cases incomprehensible and as such does not allow a reliable review. Please consider submitting the manuscript for thorough proofreading by a native speaker of English first. The reference is too old, you may want to update the literature.

Reply 1: Thank you for your suggestion and we have revised the whole manuscript hopefully now it is more improved and will be satisfied with it.