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OPEN PEER REVIEW

Voice Handicap Index in Iranian Rehabilitation Professors with and Without Vocal Complaints

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About this report

This open peer review (OPR) report shows the public comments made on this article during peer review, by the reviewers, the associate editor and the editor-in-chief, for every revision round, together with the authors' replies. Comments appear only with the consent of the people who wrote them. Reviewers who chose to sign their report are named; the others are shown as "Referee". Comments are edited for language only, and confidential remarks to the editors are not included.

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1 Original submission

4 comments · 7 Dec 2021 – 13 Dec 2021

Referee 1 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 7 Dec 2021

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to review this article.
The article addresses an important issue but requires major editing.

In the abstract of the article, the World Health Organization's definition of health has nothing to do with the next sentence, which begins with "therefore."
The results section in the abstract needs to be rewritten. The way the numbers are reported is vague and irrelevant.
The conclusion in the abstract is not logically related to the results. How did you come to this conclusion?
In the method section, the age range of professors is reported as starting at 28! Are the reported numbers correct?
The discussion lacks a logical structure and is written entirely in one paragraph. Paraphrase and discuss the results in order and separately. For example, the results of Table 4 are not discussed at all in the discussion.

Referee 2 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 8 Dec 2021

The study submitted to the MEJRH investigated voice handicap index and vocal complaints in Iranian professors of rehabilitation colleges. This is an interesting issue. To improve the manuscript, the following suggestions should be considered by the authors.

General comments:
It is better to change the title of the manuscript to: Voice handicap index and vocal complaints in Iranian university professors of rehabilitation colleges
Authors can use newer references for writing different parts of the manuscript, such as the background, literature review, and discussion.
In some places, you used colleges or schools. Please select one of these terms and use it in all sections of the manuscript.

Abstract and keywords:
The abstract is well written, but the authors should consider the following points.
The background section is very general; please be more specific about voice disorders in university professors.
In this section, you focused on VHI, while you investigated some other voice complaints. So, you should change this section based on your aims.
Objectives: Please shorten this section.
Methods: Line 3: “was” should be changed to “were”. You should merge the questions used and mentioned in the methods into a questionnaire.
Results: You should use “ $p < 0.001$” instead of “P-value<0.000”.
Conclusions: Sentence one should be removed. Please expand the conclusion section based on your results. This section is incomplete. The last sentences of this section were appropriate.
Keywords: The keywords are not appropriate. It is better to change them based on the MeSH database or to review related articles in this field.

Main text:
Background: This section lacks cohesion. For example, lines 5 and 6 were not appropriately placed.

Objectives: The aim of the current study was to investigate voice handicap index and vocal complaints in Iranian professors of rehabilitation colleges.

Methods: Explain how to perform stratified sampling.
Line 12: Please change “virtual networks” to “social media such as whats app.”
Please add a subheading in this section titled Statistical Analysis and describe the analysis methods under it.

Results:
What is the reason for reporting body mass index (BMI) in the results section? What is the use of these data in the study?

Discussion: Most of the information in the discussion section is a repetition of the topics in the results section. Please revise this information and write this section again according to these steps: In the first paragraph, state the main findings of the study (without repeating the results section). In the next paragraphs, the findings should be interpreted and analyzed. Next, the use of the study should be mentioned in one paragraph. Next, the limitations of the study should be mentioned in a separate paragraph.
Please add references for the cutoff value of VHI for distinguishing between people with and without voice problems.
Please mention the limitation of the study at the end of the discussion section.

Conclusion section: This section is not related to the results of your study. Please revise this according to your results. Sentence one should be removed.
The ethical consideration section should be moved to the end of the methods section.

Tables and figures: Tables 3 and 5 are not necessary. Please remove these and write this information in the results section.

References:
Some references have errors and should be completed, such as 2, 7, 13, and 15. Please add newer references than those you use now.

Associate Editor

MAJOR REVISION 12 Dec 2021

Dear author/s

Thank you so much for choosing the MEJRH to submit your manuscript entitled "Voice handicap index and vocal complaints in Iranian professors of rehabilitation colleges". Our reviewers and I read the manuscript carefully, and I am in complete agreement with the reviewers' comments. The article addresses an important issue but requires major revision.
While the whole manuscript needs major revisions, please consider the following when modifying your manuscript:
1. Have your article edited in English by a native speaker.
2. The whole manuscript needs to be revised in terms of coherence.
3. Reorganize the different sections of the manuscript into more detailed subsections. For example, divide the method into 1) participants, 2) procedure, 3) ethical considerations, 4) statistical analysis. Do the same for the following parts: results & discussion.
4. Remove extra tables from the results section and avoid repeating the contents of the table in the text of the manuscript.
5. As one of the reviewers correctly mentioned, the discussion needs a basic modification.
6. Add limitations & suggestions for future research at the end of the discussion, please.

I do want to give you another chance to revise your manuscript.

Looking forward to reviewing the revised paper

Editor-in-Chief MAJOR REVISION 13 Dec 2021

Dear Authors
According to the reviewers' and associate editor's comments, your article needs major revision. Please respond to the reviewers' comments and submit the required files.

2

Revision 1

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Hello

Dear Editor

All the referees' comments about the manuscript were applied, and the modified places were highlighted in the main text of the manuscript.

Thanks

General comments:
"It is better to change the title of manuscript to Voice Handicap Index and Vocal Complaints in Iranian university professors of rehabilitation colleges
Authors can use newer references for writing different parts of the manuscript, such as background, literature review, and discussion.
In some situations, you used colleges or schools. Please select one of them and use it in all sections of the manuscript.

Abstract and keywords:
The abstract is well written but some of the following should be considered by the authors.
Background section is very general please more specific about voice disorders in university professors. In this section you focused on VHI while you investigated some other voice complaints. So, you should change this section based on your aims.
Objectives: please shorten this section.
Methods: line 3: “was” should be changed to “were”. You should merged questions that used and mentioned in the methods as a questionnaire.
Results: you should use” $p < 0.001$” instead of “P-value<0.000”.
Conclusions: Sentence one should be removed. Please expand conclusion section based on your results. This section is incomplete. Last sentences of this section were appropriate.
Keywords: keywords are not appropriate. It is better to change them based on Mesh database Or investigate related articles in this field.

Main text:
Background: this section had not good cohesion. For example: lines 5 and 6 were not expressed in proper situation.
Objectives: The aim of the current study was to investigate voice handicap index and vocal complaints in Iranian professors of rehabilitation colleges.

Methods: Explain how to do stratified sampling.
Line 12: Please change “virtual networks” to “social media such as whats app.”
Please add a subtitle in this section as statistical analysis and write analysis methods on this.

Results:
What is the reason for expressing body mass index (BMI) in the results section? What is the use of this data in the study?

Discussion: Most of the information in the discussion section is a repetition of the topics in the results section. Please revise them and write this section again according these steps: In the first paragraph, the main findings of the study are stated (without repetitions same as results section). In the next paragraphs, the findings should be interpreted and analyzed. Next, the use of the study should be mentioned in one paragraph. Next, the limitations of the study should be mentioned in a separate paragraph.
Please add references for cut of point value of VHI for discriminating people with and without voice problems.
Please mention the limitation of the study and the end of discussion section.

Conclusion section: this section is not related to the results of your study. Please revise this according your results. Sentence one should be removed.
Ethical consideration section should be moved at the end of the methods section.

Tables and figures: table 3 and 5 are not necessary. Please remove these and write this information in the results section.

References:
Some references had some errors and should be completed. Such as: 2, 7, 13, and 15. Please add newer references than those you use now.

Reviewer 2:
Thank you for giving me the opportunity to review this article.
The article addresses an important issue but requires major editing.

In the abstract of the article, the World Health Organization's definition of health has nothing to do with the next sentence that begins with therefore.
The results section in the abstract needs to be rewritten. The way the numbers are reported is vague and irrelevant.
Conclusion in the abstract is not logically related to the results. How did you come to this conclusion?
In the method section, the age range of professors has been reported from 28! Are the reported numbers correct?
Discussion without logical structure and all written in one paragraph. Paraphrase and discuss the results in order and separately. For example, the results of Table 4 are not discussed at all in the discussion".

“following in modifying your manuscript:
1. Edit your article in English by a native speaker.
2. The whole manuscript needs to be revised in terms of coherence.
3. Reorganize different sections of the manuscript in more detail parts. For example, method in different parts of 1) participants, 2) procedure, 3) ethical considerations, 4) statistical analysis. And so on for the following parts of results & discussion.
4. Remove extra tables from the results section and avoid repeating the contents of the table in the text of the manuscript.
5. As one of the reviewers mentioned correctly the discussion needs a basic modification.
6. Add limitation & suggestions for future researches at the end of discussion, please”

2 Revision 1

1 comment · 29 Mar 2022

Editor-in-Chief

MINOR REVISION 29 Mar 2022

Dear Authors
According to the reviewers' and associate editor's comments, your article requires minor revision. When revising your manuscript, please consider all issues mentioned in the reviewers' comments carefully: please outline every change made in response to their comments and submit the required files.

3

Revision 2

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Hello

Dear editor-in-chief,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to submit a revised draft of the manuscript "**Voice Handicap Index and Vocal Complaints among Iranian university professors of rehabilitation colleges"** for publication in the MEJRH. We appreciate the time and effort that you and the reviewers dedicated to providing feedback on our manuscript and are grateful for the insightful comments on and valuable improvements to our paper. We have incorporated most of the suggestions made by the reviewers.

(Below, we provide the point-by-point responses. All modifications in the manuscript have been highlighted).

Best regards

Response to Comments of reviewers:

Reviewer 1:

Dear Associate Editor

I checked the revised version of the manuscript and all of my comments have been considered by the authors and were applied to the revised manuscript. Now, the manuscript is ready for publication.

Response: **thanks**

With best wishes

Reviewer 2:

The authors' answers were quite satisfactory.

Response: **thanks**

Some minor revisions for the authors to consider:

Reviewer 3:

[Minor Comment #1]: I could not find strong arguments on why you thought this study must be done. When you provided enough research in your introduction, why did you think that their results could not be extended to the professors in rehabilitation schools?

Response: **Thanks for your kind reminders. We mentioned this in the final paragraph of the "Background" part of the article.**

[Minor Comment #2]: What was the novelty of your study?

Response: **Thanks for your kind reminders. We mentioned this in the final paragraph of the "Background" part of the article.**

[Minor Comment #3]:

Your age range was quite wide: 28-67. Obviously in such a wide range, you would be confronted with many different confounding factors: the number of disease that each participant experienced, years of career in different positions, being married or single, the number of family members they had, ... I think when you did not want to take care of all these factors, dividing participants in different categories (preferably the years of work experience as a rehabilitation academic staff or the chronological age rang (25-35; 36;45; ...) would resolve most of these issues. However, you merged data from people who were in different ages, thus generalization or interpretation of your findings would be extremely difficult. I do suggest you to reorganize your data presentation and avoid to merge all findings from different ages, then your readers will be able to see the effects of age, years of work experience as an academic staff,....
If you apply these changes, you need to revise your introduction and discussion accordingly.
Finally, after all correction will be made, please ask a well-known institute to edit your paper.

Response: **Thanks for your kind reminders. This article is the result of a master's thesis. Classification by age has not been one of the aims of this dissertation, and it is not possible to do so. Table 1 is added to present the demographic characteristics of participants in terms of age ranges, and work experience. Marital status and university degrees were omitted during the proposal defense according to the comments of the referee. This table has only been added on the recommendation of the respected referee. Finally, we edited the text and highlighted the corrected phrases in blue color.**

Reviewer 4:

[Minor Comment #1]: 1. In the abstract the objectives were stated as "Study and compare VHI and Vocal Complaints in a sample of university professors". based on your study, you only included one group of university rehabilitation professors in your study and then divided them into 2 groups base on Vocal Complaints. So your study aim was the study of Vocal Complaints university rehabilitation professors and comparison of VHI in university rehabilitation professors with and without Vocal Complaints.

Response: **Thanks for your kind reminders. We revised the sentence in the title section and the objectives section too.**

[Minor Comment #2]: 2. In the abstract "The mean scores of the Voice Handicap Index between the two groups, with and without Vocal Complaints, were significant both in the total ... " should be changed to the "The mean difference of the Voice Handicap Index scores between the two groups, with and without Vocal Complaints, were significant both in the total ... "

Response: **Thanks for your kind reminders. We revised the sentence in the abstract section and highlighted it.**

[Minor Comment #3]: 3. In the abstract you concluded "Iranian university professors of rehabilitation Sciences with Vocal Complaints had higher VHI scores". My question is that Iranian university professors of rehabilitation Sciences with Vocal Complaints had higher VHI scores rather than who? Compared to other professional voice users with voice complaints or Iranian university professors of rehabilitation Sciences without Vocal Complaints.

Response: **Compared to Iranian university professors of rehabilitation Sciences without Vocal Complaints. We revised the sentence in the abstract section and highlighted it.**

[Minor Comment #4]:
4. Please check and change your key words. In my opinion, word index alone is not a good keyword.

Response: **We changed our keywords according to the comments of reviewers, according to MESH. Our prior Keywords were such as: “Voice handicap index” or “vocal complaint.” Please guide us.**

[Minor Comment #5]: The phrase of "This study is approved under the ethical approval code of IR.IUMS.REC.1399.1230" should be changed to the " This study was approved under the ethical approval code of IR.IUMS.REC.1399.1230"

Response: **Thanks for your kind reminders. We revised the sentence in the methods section and highlighted it.**

[Minor Comment #6]: The sample studied in the present study is very large in terms of age range. This makes it difficult to control the impact of confounding variables such as work experience, age, etc. And prevents the interpretation and generalization of the results correctly. Please present the demographic characteristics of participants in terms of age ranges, work experience, marital status, university degree, etc. in a table. and it would be better now that you could not limit the samples based on the above confounding variables at least You examined and compared the VHI & vocal complaints separately in the confounding variables subgroups.

Response: **Thanks for your kind reminders. Table 1 is added to present the demographic characteristics of participants in terms of age ranges, and work experience. Marital status and university degrees were omitted during the proposal defense according to the comments of the referee. This table has only been added on the recommendation of the respected referee.**

[Minor Comment #7]: Please avoid duplication of content in the text of the article. For example, mentioning language sampling method in methods and results repetitively.

Response: **Thanks for your kind reminders. We revised it in the results section and highlighted it.**

[Minor Comment #8]: The entire text needs to be reviewed and edited in English by a well-known institute.

Response: **Thanks for your kind reminders. We edited the text and highlighted the corrected phrases in blue color.**

3 Revision 2

1 comment · 8 Jun 2022

Editor-in-Chief

ACCEPT 8 Jun 2022

Dear Authors
We are pleased to inform you that your article has been accepted for publication in the MEJRHS. We hope to receive other suitable articles from your group.