



SDI Review Form 1.6

Journal Name:	International Journal of TROPICAL DISEASE & Health
Manuscript Number:	2014_IJTDH_12672
Title of the Manuscript:	The Male: female ration at birth is depressed by Maltese Parliamentary elections and increased by other non-electroral envents
Type of the Article	Original Research Article

General guideline for Peer Review process:

This journal's peer review policy states that **NO** manuscript should be rejected only on the basis of '**lack of Novelty**', provided the manuscript is scientifically robust and technically sound.

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PART 1: Review Comments

	Reviewer's comment	Author's comment (if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)
Compulsory REVISION comments	Abstract - The author seems to think election are stressful events that can lead to affect M/F. There are other factors like in the female, the workplace, unemployment etc. - Does not show the research design - Line 13 a sentence starts in words and not numbers - Tools of the data analysis is not shown - Conclusion should line 29 ." it would appear----- Needs to be re-written	• Agreed, and mention of the workplace and unemployment have now been specifically added in the intro. A huge no. of factors have been implicated as stated, hence (1-3). It would be very very longwinded to state them all but this can be done if required. The following has also been added for clarification and to identify a potential weakness in this study: "While there were no other large scale intercurrent factors that may have influenced M/F, data that might have allowed further analysis with regard to individual pregnancy and other risk factors that may have influenced M/F, was unavailable." • I have added that this is an ecological study in the intro. I am uncertain what else needs to be added to the research design. Modus operandi, data sources, statistics – all were mentioned. Happy to add whatever else is needed if specified. • Corrected as requested. • All of the statistical tools used are mentioned, including the BioMedStat which was recently formally published in a peer-reviewed journal (14), based on original work by (12, 13). But happy to add whatever else is needed if specified. • Changed as requested.



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<u>Compulsory</u> REVISION comments	Introduction The paper do no give the baseline data the M/F before the elections as point of reference to mark the changes The political situation and election process which might influence M/F The author should show other possible factors that can influence M/F The definition of the problem is not clear - Line 35 should be removed - Line 45 (1,2) full stop is missing and no year for the reference Trivers- Willard - This paper is well written but there are some doubts that the authors need to clarify.	Pardon the oversight, baseline calculated and the following sentence has been added to the first line of the results section "For the period 1966-2013, mean M/F was 0.5176 (95% CI 0.5156-0.5196)." While many factors may influence M/F, no other significant intercurrent factors (such as earthquakes etc) were present. This is now stated in the methods just before software: "For all of these events, no other unusual intercurrent factors (such as extraordinary natural events) were present." The point of the paper (and definition of problem) are stated as conventionally in the last paragraph of the methods section before the software used. Line 35 removed as requested. The full stop is present before the references as per convention. "...greater rate than female pregnancies.(1,2)" Year of TW hypothesis included in the text as requested.
<u>Compulsory</u> REVISION comments	Methodology - Some of the comments on this section is on the abstract - Do not show where the study was carried and time period - Do not describe how the information were collected and analysed - Line 83 and 84 personal communication – there was no document to support the argument and decided to use personnel communication - Line 96 excel what is it- a program? - Line 98 Chi test is written twice	- Wording in methodology changed and mean M/F included for entire period studied. - The following text was added "This study was carried out in Malta over the period April to June 2014" as requested. - Data collection is described in the second sentence of the methods section. - Data analysis is described in the penultimate paragraph of the methods section. - The data for the last two years is not officially in the public domain, although



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	- Which package was used to analyse data is it bio.med-stat excel or the excell	collated, hence the “personal communication” – no research hypothesis implied. This sentence has therefore been modified thus “Data for the last two years was obtained directly from the Maltese Department of Health Information and Research in an Excel program spreadsheet.” - Yes, Excel is software. Sentence modified thus “Microsoft’s spreadsheet program - Excel - was used for data entry” - The sentence has been clarified thus “Chi tests (for 2x2 tables) and chi tests for trend (for 2xn tables) were used for trend testing of male and female births” - The addin is explained thus “An Excel add-in is designed to complement the basic functionality offered by Excel in the Windows environment. These software packages add optional commands and features to Excel as soon as Excel loads.”
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<u>Compulsory</u> REVISION comments	Results - Not well written for the common reader to grasp what has been presented - The author did not show how he will handle other factors that can lead to individual to have stress - Line 110 –election years- which are they?	• I hope that the changes implemented have sufficiently improved the paper to allow publication. • There were no other intercurrent events that might have influenced M/F and this is now stated thus: “Four other important political events were ... For all of these events, no other unusual intercurrent factors (such as extraordinary natural events) were present.” • Elections months are listed in table 1: “Index months were months in which parliamentary elections were held. ... between 1966-2013 (table 1).”
<u>Compulsory</u> REVISION comments	Conclusion - Line 137-139 should be removed and sent to introduction - Conclusion is weak and needs to be re-written	Lines 137-9 are pure results and have therefore been retained in the results section: “An overall increasing trend in M/F was present from month -10 to month -1 (figure 2 - χ^2 for trend=8.6, $p = 0.003$). This was followed by a significant decline from month -1 to month +4 (χ^2 for trend=9.2, $p = 0.002$).
<u>Optional/General</u> comments		