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Journal Name:	Journal of Scientific Research and Reports
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-electoralevents
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 – new changes effected in green

	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 - Does not show the research design and how the data were analysed - Did not follow Journal format for writing abstract AIM, Methodology, results, conclusion	• The study was retrospective and this is now stated. • Methods has been split for clarification into data and analysis • Analysis was with chi tests and this is now also stated. See analysis section as mentioned above. • Abstract headings amended as requested.
Compulsory REVISION comments	Introduction The paper do not 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 definition of the problem is not clear - Line 44 (1,2) full stop is missing	Several elections were included so interelection year M/F has been calculated and this statement added in the results: Mean M/F for interelection years (1969, 1974, 1979, 1984, 1990, 1994, 1997, 2001, 2006, 2011) was 0.5210 (95% CI 0.5166-0.5255, 25560 males and 23497 females). It is already stated that For all of these events, no other unusual intercurrent factors (such as extraordinary natural events) were present. The problem is now defined just before the methods: This was deemed possible since stress is known to reduce M/F and political events in Malta are known to cause stress. Line 44 full stop is before references as required.
Minor REVISION comments	Methodology - Do not Describe how the information were collected and who collected the information	- This was added Monthly male and female births were obtained electronically from official Malta Government publications back to 1966 by the author
REVISION comments	Results - Greatly improved	



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<u>Major revision</u>	Discussion component is missing	The section discussion was erroneously labelled conclusion. Corrected. The discussion was amplified as requested and the following was added to discussion section: The stress-M/F lowering hypothesis is supported by studies that followed up the effects of stressful events on populations. For example, M/F fell in New York City three months after the terrorist attacks of September 11, rather than seven or more months later as would be the case were male conceptions to have been reduced by this event.(19). These findings are further supported by a simultaneous increase in premature births which also rapidly recovered.(20) Similar findings were noted for the same time period, following the above mentioned terrorist attack, in California (21) suggesting that witnessing harm befalling on others induces biological responses that resemble those in the persons harmed.(22) This was confirmed in a study that investigated all fetal deaths at or greater than 20 weeks of gestation in this country from 1996 to 2002.(23) Thus, male mortality is higher than female mortality during gestation. Improved socioeconomic conditions and medical care have been shown to be associated with a lowering of prenatal mortality rates. The amelioration of gestational conditions and a reduction in factors that predispose to spontaneous abortion will therefore spare more male than female births, increasing M/F. This is evidenced in developed countries where the decline in stillbirth rates has been drastic, with, for
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		example, the ratio of stillbirths to live births dropping from 30-40/1000 in the late 1800s in Sweden and Belgium to 10/1000 in the 1970s. This was paralleled by a decline in M/F of stillbirths.(24) This finding is attributed to stress in early pregnancy increasing spontaneous abortion rates, with male pregnancies being affected more than female pregnancies.(25) It was shown, for example, that malformed and otherwise abnormal embryos and fetuses of both genders are spontaneously aborted, whereas normally formed embryos and fetuses favour male loss in excess of female loss.(26) This necessitated the addition of several new references: 19-26. This was added Conclusion Stress reduces M/F in accordance with the Trivers-Willard hypothesis.(4)
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<u>Major</u> REVISION comments	Conclusion - Line 137-139 should be removed and sent to introduction Still the conclusion is weak and needs to be improved - The author do not tell us if s/he is rejecting/accepting the null hypothesis	- Lines 137-139 are these "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, $p = 0.002$). These are results and it would be inappropriate to put them in the introduction. - Discussion and conclusion amplified as already mentioned. - This was added to the discussion: Discussion This study shows that parliamentary elections in Malta do influence M/F in the direction anticipated by the M/F-stress lowering hypothesis, and the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. -
<u>Optional/General</u> comments	follow the journal format for writing scientific paper as shown on abstract comments Not ready for publication	I have striven to comply with all suggestions. If any other changes are required, then do please let me know.