

## Nutritional status, physical performance, and disability in the elderly of the Peruvian Andes: reply to Ortiz

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Dear Editor,

We thank Dr. Ortiz for his careful reading of our recently published work [1] in which we assessed the impact of malnutrition on physical activity and performance and for his thoughtful comments. This author correctly reported the importance of depression as risk factor for poor physical activity.

Depression is a common condition in the elderly population [2] and associated with poor physical performance [3]. Thus, its inclusion could have substantially modified our findings. Even if agree with him regarding the fact that mental disorders are highly prevalent and often unrecognized in older Peruvian people, we decided not to include depression in our analysis mainly for two reasons. First, in our study, we did not assess depressive mood with any validated scale. This first point represents an important limitation of our findings. However, for logistical reasons, all the medical conditions were self-reported [4]. Second, only one subject reported to have self-reported depression and used an anti-depressant medication. Thus, again, we could not use this as confounder of our analyses.

In conclusion, we thank Dr. Ortiz for his careful comments and suggestions. We agree with him that depression is often a hidden condition with important health consequences [5], also in mediating the association between nutrition and poor physical activity. The importance of this

factor, however, should be explored by future studies specific for Peruvian older people.

**Author contributions** Veronese and Tramontano wrote the letter. All the authors have contributed to the manuscript, read it, approved the final version, and gave permission for their name to be included as co-author.

**Compliance with ethical standards**

**Conflict of interest** On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

**Ethical approval** The study was approved by the local ethics committee.

**Informed consent** Each participant gave informed consent prior to the study.

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