



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Children in Azerbaijan at the Beginning of the Third Millennium: Social Analysis Based on Basic Demographic and some Educational and Cultural Indicators

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

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### Keywords

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The article briefly describes the role of children in Azerbaijani society at the beginning of the 3rd millennium, the importance of social analysis of the role of children in society (in the state), issues of formation of the next generation, social analysis of the standard of living of children based on the main demographic, some educational and cultural indicators. It also examines the main causes of child mortality in Azerbaijan, the state of children's access to health care, education and social infrastructure, social analysis of preschool and school institutions in the country, and in conclusion, based on the analysis of data and findings, explains what problems children in Azerbaijan may face in the future.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Azerbaijan - first Democratic Republic (May 28, 1919) and twice independent state in the East (August 30, 1991) in the Turkic and Muslim worlds - is a unitary semi-presidential, constitutional republic located in the South Caucasus, west of the Caspian Sea basin, a multinational and multi-religious state with a multicultural lifestyle. The country is bordered by the Russian Federation to the north, Georgia to the northwest, Armenia to the west, Turkey to the southwest and Iran to the south. The capital is Baku. The official language is Azerbaijani. It is a secular state. Most of the population of the republic professes Islam (Mammadov, 2023:407).

Children are the greatest and most valuable wealth of every nation and state. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the requirements of national legislation, a child is every person under the age of 18 and who has not achieved full functional capacity (Constitution, 1995). Raising children as healthy, useful citizens of society is a difficult and proud task at the same time. Both the family and the state bear great responsibility for raising children with a sense of patriotism, attachment to their history, national roots, high respect for adults and spiritual wealth, for their formation as individuals and citizens. A well-educated child is the hope of the family and the salvation of the nation. Therefore, the state always pays attention to the problems of children in Azerbaijan.

For information, I would like to note that the population of the Republic of Azerbaijan at the beginning of 2024 was 10 million 180,8 thousand people (see **Table 1**). Of these, 2,633,000 people (1,402,200 boys, 1,230,800 girls) are children aged 0-17 years, in urban and rural areas – total (Statistical, 2024).

**Table 1. Population (at the beginning of the year)**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Population total, thsd. persons</b>	<b>Including:</b>		<b>Relative to the total population (in percent)</b>	
		<b>urban population</b>	<b>rural population</b>	<b>urban population</b>	<b>rural population</b>
2000	8,032,8	4,107,3	3,925,5	51,1	48,9
2006	8,553,1	4,502,4	4,050,7	52,6	47,4
2011	9,111,1	4,829,5	4,281,6	53,0	47,0
2016	9,705,6	5,152,4	4,553,2	53,1	46,9
2021	10,026,1	5,494,4	4,531,7	54,8	45,2
2024	10,180,8	5,547,8	4,633,0	54,5	45,5

**Social analysis of the role of children in society (state) is important for a number of important reasons:**

- 1. For the formulation of development strategies and reforms:** Conducting social analysis of children's rights and development helps to understand their needs, problems and potential. This knowledge enables government and non-governmental organizations to formulate more effective policies and programmes for children.
- 2. To promote social justice:** The role of children in society is important to ensure that their rights and opportunities are fairly distributed. Social analysis helps assess the representation of children in various social and economic groups and identifies injustices.
- 3. Investigate the level of education and health:** Social analysis of children allows to study their influence on education and health systems. This can help in identifying facts that play an important role in children's development.
- 4. Study the level of social relations and behavior:** Since children build relationships with other members of society, social analysis allows us to understand how these relations are formed and the influence of children on social structures in society. It is also useful for identifying problems that the community can deal with.
- 5. Inclusion and diversity:** Social analysis of children provides insight into the experiences of children from different cultures, social groups and economic situations. This helps to develop strategic approaches that support inclusion and coexistence in society.
- 6. Predict the development of the next generation:** The role of children in society has a direct impact on the development of future generations. The results of social analysis allow us to predict the future position of children and their contribution to society.
- 7. To study the attitude towards children in society and social thought:** Analysis of children allows us to correctly and objectively understand how relationships with men and women, as well as with the elderly and young people, are formed in society.

Thus, social analysis of the role that children play in society is very important for understanding their needs, rights and potential, as well as for the overall development of society. This analysis helps to develop strategies to strengthen the role of children in society and a healthier future. Analysis of the role of children in society and their development is important for the health and sustainability of society. Focusing on children can help shape a brighter and fairer future.

## METHODOLOGY

**The following methodology was used to write the article:**

### 1. Defining the objectives of the study

*The main objective:* To analyze the situation of children in the Republic of Azerbaijan in the third millennium through the prism of cultural, educational and demographic indicators.

***Objectives:***

To identify the current state of the cultural and educational sphere for children.

To study the demographic characteristics of the child population.

To assess the role of libraries in the process of socialization and education of children.

To conduct a social analysis based on the collected statistics.

### 2. Data collection

***Demographic indicators:***

Using official statistics (for example, data from the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan) on the number of children, gender and age structure.

***Cultural and educational indicators:***

Collecting data on children's access to education, literacy level, number of schools and their equipment.

***Libraries:***

Research into the infrastructure of library services for children: number of libraries, availability, range of literature and educational resources, the role of libraries in the lives of children.

### 3. Methodology of analysis

***Social analysis:***

Use of qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative analysis may include interviews with teachers, psychologists and parents, the point of view and thoughts of a specialist scientist; quantitative - processing of statistical data.

***Statistical analysis:***

Use of descriptive statistics methods to process the collected data, visualization of results (graphs, tables) for a better understanding of the current situation.

Correlation analysis to identify relationships between various indicators (for example, access to education and the level of reading activity).

### 4. Conclusions and recommendations

A brief overview of the results obtained for each section (cultural, educational, demographic indicators and the role of libraries).

### 5. Article design

A clear structure with sections (introduction, methodology, results and discussion, and conclusion).

Correct citation of sources, use of graphs and tables for clarity.

We believe that this approach will allow us to create a comprehensive analysis of the state of children in Azerbaijan, based on reliable data and relevant research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Republic of Azerbaijan, which managed to break away from the Soviet empire at the end of the 20th century and entered the third millennium as an independent state, is considered the

most powerful state in the South Caucasus region in terms of its territory, socio-economic status and its army, which is always ready to defend its independence and territorial integrity.

We believe that this success is due to the science, information resources, culture, education, upbringing and persons with the highest level of intellectual or creative functioning of the personality that have historically developed in the territory of Azerbaijan. It is not for nothing that we mentioned this opinion. Azerbaijan is the birthplace of the world-famous poet Nizami Ganjavi (1141-1209), poet Muhammad Fuzuli (1494-1556), poet and ruler Shah Ismayil Khatai (1487-1524), composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov (1885-1948), composer Gara Garayev (1918-1982), the founder of the theory of fuzzy logic (Aliasker Zadeh, 1965) professor Lotfi A. Zadeh (1921-2017), professor Kamal Soltanov (was born in 1949), an Azerbaijani mathematician and scientist who solved one of the seven important mathematical problems - the "Navier-Stokes equation" (Soltanov, 2024), which had not been solved for many years, etc.

Geniuses (persons with the highest level of intellectual or creative functioning of the personality) determine the characteristic features and quality of society. Society follows their path. Ordinary people are just as important, because society lives because of them. But geniuses form the identity card of the society.

But will modern society be able to form geniuses who can take us to the depths of the 3rd millennium from where we stand (on the threshold of the 3rd millennium)? How will this process happen? What is important to pay attention to? There are many questions. And these questions concern everyone who tries to understand the future of himself/herself, those around him/her, and the world in general. Let's try to answer these questions.

For this purpose, we conducted a social analysis based on the main demographic, some educational and cultural indicators of children in Azerbaijan for the period 2000-2024. We took the main statistical indicators used in the social analysis from statistical digests published by the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, considering them to be true. We would like to share these analyses with you.

According to statistical data, at the beginning of 2000, the number of children aged 0-14 in the country was 2,545,6 thousand, at the beginning of 2006 – 2,153,3 thousand, at the beginning of 2011 – 2,032,4 thousand, and at the beginning of 2024 this figure was 2,161 thousand people. As can be seen, a decrease is observed in certain periods (see **Figure 1**). In the end, we will summarize the reasons (Children, 2023).

Age-specific population analysis is used for a variety of purposes. For example, governments and organizations use age-specific population analysis to develop social, economic, and educational programs that take into account the needs of different age groups (Askerova, 2021).

Understanding age distribution helps in forecasting labor market needs and identifying areas for creating new jobs.

Analysis helps optimize the allocation of resources in health, education, and social services, ensuring access to services for different age groups.

Population data helps researchers analyze demographic trends and their impact on society, the economy, and culture.

Thus, age-specific population analysis is an important tool for making informed decisions in various areas of public life.

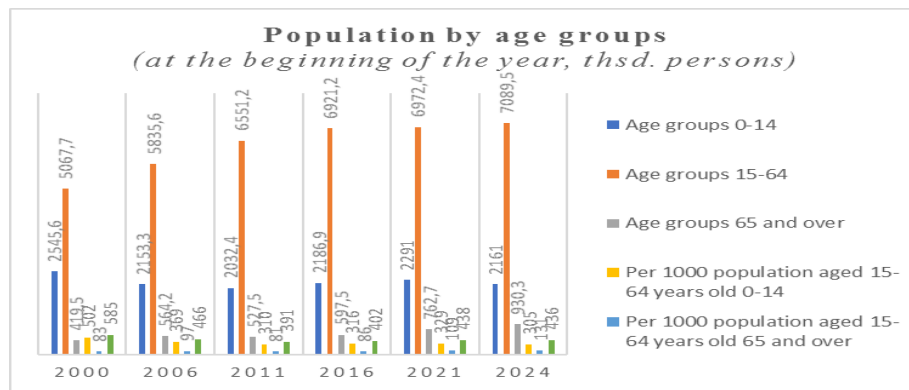


Figure 1. Population by age groups

Natural increase, births and deaths in Azerbaijan could not be ignored when analyzing the period under study. **Table 2** shows natural increase, births and deaths in Azerbaijan for 2000-2023, maintaining different intervals between years for comparison (Children, 2024).

Table 2. Natural increase, births and deaths

Years	Person			Per 1000 population		
	Births	Deaths	Natural increase	Births	Deaths	Natural increase
2000	116,994	46,701	70,293	14,7	5,9	8,8
2006	148,946	52,248	96,698	17,5	6,2	11,3
2011	176,072	53,762	122,310	19,4	5,9	13,5
2016	159,464	56,648	102,816	16,5	5,9	10,6
2021	112,284	76,878	35,406	11,2	7,7	3,5
2023	112,620	60,150	52,470	11,1	5,9	5,2

Later, analyses were conducted on the age and sex distribution of children aged 0 to 17 in the republic, as well as the distribution of their deaths by sex and age, although this is very sad and gloomy (Children, 2023).

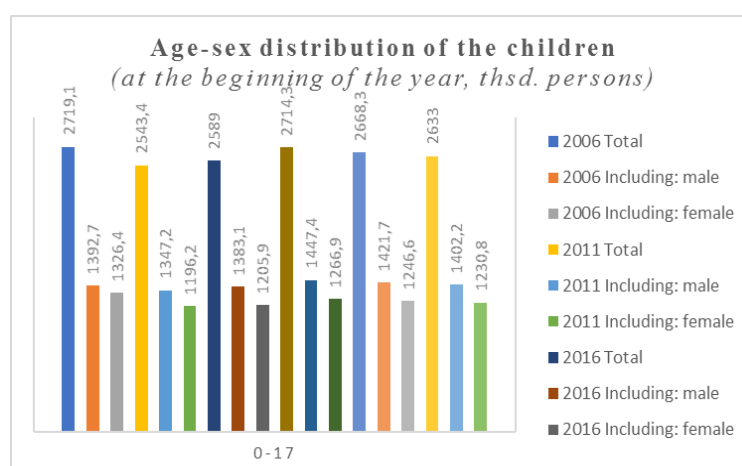


Figure 2. Age-sex distribution of the children

**Figure 2** shows the age and sex distribution of children aged 0-17 in Azerbaijan for 2006-2024 for comparison. **Figure 3** shows the distribution of mortality of children aged 0-17 by sex and age in our republic for 2005-2023 (Children, 2024).

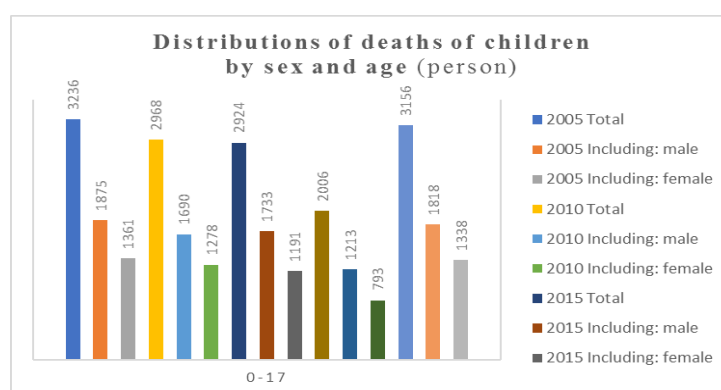


Figure 3. Distributions of deaths of children by sex and age

According to the Central Intelligence Agency's report on the ranking of 227 countries with the lowest infant mortality rates in 2024, Azerbaijan is in 123rd place (deaths/1,000 live births - 10.9) (Country, 2024).

This is considered a low figure. Despite this, the main causes of child mortality in Azerbaijan include:

1. **Infectious diseases:** Diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea, tuberculosis and malaria, as well as COVID-19, are among the main causes of death among children.
2. **Maternal health problems and complications during childbirth:** Female diseases that developed during pregnancy, problems during childbirth, etc.
3. **Medical illiteracy:** Lack of life knowledge of parents, preschool and school-age children about primary health care.
4. **Military conflict, unexploded ordnance and landmines:** The war caused by Armenia's territorial claims against Azerbaijan, children killed during the war, hundreds of thousands of landmines, unexploded ordnance buried on the territory of Azerbaijan, and the consequences caused by them.
5. **Medical negligence and parental neglect:** Medical negligence is professional ignorance and carelessness that causes harm to the patient's health. Parental neglect is the failure to provide children with proper parental attention and care.

These factors combine to create complex problems that require comprehensive solutions and improved access to health care, education and social infrastructure.

If at the beginning of 2000 the number of doctors of all specialties in the Republic of Azerbaijan was 28,5 thousand, the number of hospitals - 739, the number of beds for sick children - 12,2 thousand, the number of beds for pregnant and lactating women was 7,4 thousand, the number of medical institutions providing outpatient care to the population was 1,611, then at the beginning of 2024 the number of doctors of all specialties in the country was 33,6 thousand people, the number of hospitals - 338, the number of beds for sick children - 4,3 thousand, the number of beds for pregnant and lactating women - 3,5 thousand, the number of medical institutions providing outpatient care to the population was 1,665. The reduction in medical institutions and hospital beds in these years is associated with the reforms carried out in the health care system (Children, 2024).

Analyzing the number of preschools (see **Table 3**) and schools (see **Table 4**) in a country can provide a wealth of valuable information and reveal various aspects of education and social policy (Children, 2023). Here are some key points that can be gleaned from such an analysis:

1. **Access to education:** The number of preschools and schools can indicate the accessibility of education for children. A high number of institutions may indicate that children have the opportunity to receive education at an earlier age, which has a positive impact on their development.

2. **Quality of education:** The ratio of the number of institutions to the number of students can indicate the workload of teaching staff and the quality of the educational process. For example, overcrowded institutions may reduce the quality of education.

**Table 3. Preschool educational institutions (at the beginning of the year)**

Years	Number of preschool educational institutions - total	Including:		Number of children in preschool educational institutions - total, thsd. persons	Including:	
		state	non-state		state	non-state
2001	<b>1,790</b>	1,790	-	<b>111,0</b>	111,0	-
2006	<b>1,764</b>	1,761	3	<b>110,0</b>	109,9	0,1
2011	<b>1,638</b>	1,623	15	<b>112,9</b>	112,1	0,8
2016	<b>1,722</b>	1,656	66	<b>117,2</b>	114,8	2,4
2021	<b>1,825</b>	1,692	133	<b>126,5</b>	121,4	5,1
2024	<b>1,857</b>	1,700	157	<b>116,3</b>	109,9	6,4

3. **Demographic trends:** Changes in the number of preschools and schools can reflect demographic changes, such as an increase or decrease in the number of children in the country. This can help governments plan and adapt education infrastructure to current needs.

4. **Funding and investment:** An increase in the number of institutions can indicate investment in education and the priority given to this sector by the government or private investors.

5. **Social policy:** The analysis can show which groups of the population have access to educational services and which do not. This will help to identify inequalities and the need for improved education policies.

**Table 4. State and non-state general educational institutions (at the beginning of the school year)**

School year	Number of general educational institutions - total	Including: number of special education institutions for children with limited health	Number of pupils - total, thsd. persons	Number of teachers (key staff), persons
2000-2001	<b>4,548</b>	20	<b>1,653,7</b>	<b>161,3</b>
2005-2006	<b>4,550</b> (of which 12 are non-state)	21	<b>1,583,6</b>	<b>171,6</b>
2010-2011	<b>4,532</b> (of which 17 are non-state)	19	<b>1,324,6</b>	<b>172,4</b>
2015-2016	<b>4,462</b> (of which 23 are non-state)	16	<b>1,353,3</b>	<b>158,1</b>
2020-2021	<b>4,431</b> (of which 34 are non-state)	16	<b>1,656,8</b>	<b>153,1</b>
2023-2024	<b>4,422</b> (of which 34 are non-state)	16	<b>1,704,2</b>	<b>150,8</b>

6. **Geographical disparities:** Differences in the number of institutions between urban and rural areas may indicate uneven distribution of educational resources and the need for their redistribution.

**7. Compliance with International Standards:** Comparison of the number of institutions with international standards can help to understand how well the country's education system meets global trends and expectations.

Overall, the analysis of the number of pre-school and school institutions is a powerful tool for understanding the state and development of the education system in the country.

Today, there are more than 12,000 libraries of various types with a wide library and information network in Azerbaijan (Mammadov, 2022). Approximately 38,14% of these libraries, i.e. 4,577, belong to school and children's libraries. Thus, according to official documents of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, for the 2022-2023 academic year, 4,399 state formal general education institutions (1,684,7 thousand pupils), 32 non-state formal general education institutions (20,135 pupils), 53 state secondary specialized educational institutions (58,8 thousand students) and 6 non-state secondary specialized educational institutions (5,814 students) has operated. By 2023, the number of children's libraries operating under the Ministry of Culture system was 87, the total document fund of these libraries was 1,5 million copies, and the number of their readers was 255 thousand people (Children, 2024).

Due to the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the world, according to the results of a sample statistical survey on the use of ICT in households in our country, the number of child Internet users in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2022 was 88,1 percent of the total number of children in the country that year; 94,5 percent of these Internet users live in urban areas, and 80,4 percent in rural areas. Among them, the number of child Internet users aged 7-15 was 91,7% (about 632 thousand people) (Children, 2023).

Thus, libraries providing documentary and information services to the society in the Republic of Azerbaijan carry out systematic activities in accordance with the Law (which was adopted in 1998) of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Librarianship" (Law, 1999), and we believe that they cope well with the goals and objectives set before them, serve the children of our country in accordance with the time and the new education system, carry out comprehensive propaganda of literature and information, organize the maximum use of the information resources of the republic in the field of patriotism, labor, moral and aesthetic education of children and adolescents.

## CONCLUSION

Children are our present, children are our future. It is impossible to take a successful step into the future without looking back at the past. In this article, the importance and relevance of the topic were emphasized, and we truly believe that children are the foundation of any society, its most valuable resource. And that is why we decided to conduct a brief sociological study on Azerbaijan, which is located on the ancient Silk Road and is historically called the Gate of the East, based on quantitative indicators of a historical period of about 25 years.

Our goal was not to make assumptions using data with the help of various mathematical-statistical formulas or artificial intelligence. Our main goal was to explain the reason for the formation of real quantitative indicators that we received after months of refinement, the importance of studying them and how they can be used in the analysis of emerging problems.

Please note that the study did not examine public opinion or conduct a questionnaire survey. Because in any case, ultimately, the state is the direct guardian of children. The state plays an important role in the lives of children, providing them with opportunities for full development and the realization of their potential. And public opinion is necessary for the formation of any opinion in society or for obtaining (learning) any opinion (attitude) from society. The state is governed not by public opinion, but by ideas in the interests of statehood.

In its current form, the article seems to be more in line with the format of a research note or country report. However, the problems analyzed in Azerbaijan in this article, their causes and solutions are similar to the problems faced by most developing countries, especially developing post-Soviet countries (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, etc.). Unfortunately, given the



paucity of such published social scientific studies on countries with rich quantitative data, on the topic of "Children in the Third Millennium" there are few, we attempted to conduct such a study.

It should be noted that the revenues of the state budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2024 were determined at the level of 34,173,000.0 thousand manats, expenses - 36,763,000.0 thousand manats (State budget, 2023).

Out of 36,763,000.0 thousand manats allocated for expenses from the state budget, 236,076,085.0 manats were allocated for science, 7,126,347,420.0 manats for defense and national security, 4,550,334,684.0 manats for education, 1,866,395,005.0 manats for healthcare. 521,941,580.0 manats were allocated for social protection, 9,902,737,486.0 manats for economic activity (Decree, 2023). Among the expenses I listed, the expenses allocated to the sphere of science (236,076,085.0 manats) constituted approximately 0,6422% of the total volume of state budget expenses. We do not evaluate this approach to science and scientific research positively.

A small budget allocated for science can significantly limit the scope and scale of scientific research. Scientists will be able to conduct only small projects, which will reduce the diversity and depth of research. This can negatively affect the country's competitiveness in the global scientific community. Lack of funding can lead to young scientists not seeing prospects in a scientific career and preferring to move to other areas, which can create a shortage of qualified specialists. Less funding can lead to a decrease in the number of publications and the discovery of new studies, which will negatively affect the development of science in the country and so on.

Based on the main demographic, some educational and cultural indicators of the republic, which we analyzed during the discussion, and based on our current conclusions, we assume that in the 3rd millennium, children in Azerbaijan may face the following problems:

1. **Economic difficulties:** Despite economic growth, poverty levels and inequality may still affect children's well-being, limiting their access to basic services such as education and health care.
  2. **Education:** Although the country is implementing reforms in the education system, problems with the quality of education, lack of resources and inequality in access to education may still persist, especially in rural areas.
  3. **Mental health:** In the context of rapid social and economic change, as well as conflict (for example, due to Armenia-Azerbaijan relations), children may be exposed to stress and trauma, which requires attention to mental health issues.
  4. **Environmental issues:** Increasing environmental pollution and climate change may negatively affect the health and future of children.
  5. **Family and social factors:** Family problems such as violence or divorce can also have a serious impact on the emotional and physical well-being of children.
  6. **Health and disease:** Despite improvements, access to quality health care may be limited for some categories of the population, especially in remote areas.
- An increase in morbidity, especially infectious diseases, is expected. This is a manifestation of indifference to nature and ecology in the world, as well as the formation of inorganic products.
7. **Culture and identity:** Globalization can lead to the loss of cultural identity and traditional values, which can also affect the upbringing and development of children.
  8. **Child labor:** Despite laws regulating child labor, child labor problems may continue to exist in some areas.
  9. **Drug addiction, alcoholism and smoking:** The use of such products in everyday life, secretly or openly, by older generations, including their visual display on TV channels, in films, on the Internet, arouses interest in children. The bans imposed on them further increase interest. This is a common problem of the whole world.
  10. **Virtual crime or cybercrime:** This concerns the commission of crimes using the Internet, its services, virtual networks, virtual games, etc. Involvement of children in various crimes through money or other temptations.

These problems require a comprehensive approach from the state, public organizations and the international community to solve them and ensure the successful development of children in Azerbaijan.

### Authors' Contributions

The authors made an equivalent contribution to the preparation of the article for publication (in the order indicated in the "Methodology" section).

The authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript and declare no conflict of interest.

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