Author's response to reviews

Title: A survey of knowledge, attitudes and practice of emergency contraception among university students in Cameroon

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Anita Makri MA, MPH
Assistant Editor
BMC-series Journals

Re: 2560267421262078 - A survey of knowledge, attitude and practice of emergency contraceptive pills among university students in Cameroon

Dear Anita,

Thank you for the opportunity to re-submit our revised manuscript for consideration.

We are happy that one reviewer has recommended acceptance of our manuscript after discretionary revisions. In addition, the revisions requested by the other reviewer are minor and have been appropriately addressed in the revised manuscript.

In the following pages we provide a point-by-point response to the reviewers. We have put the comments in bold and inside quotation marks, with our response below each comment.

The comments have helped to improve our manuscript, for which we are grateful. We trust that the revisions meet the requirements for publication.

Yours sincerely,

Eugene
Reviewer 1: Ernest O Orji

Discretionary Revisions

1. ‘In the title "contraceptive pills" should be replaced with "contraception"’

The replacement has been done. Thanks.

2. “Accept after discretionary revisions”

Thanks for this recommendation.
Reviewer 2: Margareta Larsson

General comment

1. “The problem on unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions kill many women in the world every year. It is therefore important to investigate and promote emergency contraception, the only method that can be used after an unprotected intercourse providing "a second chance". In order to use the method in case of need both women and men need to know about it and also be able to access it. This paper investigates knowledge, attitudes and use in a student population in Cameroon. The paper is well written but would benefit from some improvements.”

This is compliment. Thanks.

Major compulsory revisions

Background

2. “Be consistent with the use of terminology and abbreviations. EC is most often used for emergency contraception which includes all methods and ECP for emergency contraceptive pills”

The use of EC has been limited to emergency contraception and ECP to emergency contraceptive pills, as suggested, throughout the article. Thanks.

3. “Morning-after-pills are ECPs and postcoital contraception can be both ECP and IUD insertion which is not clear. Those terms are still used so I would suggest deletion of ‘in the past’.”

The phrase has been deleted. Thanks.

4. “Emergency contraception includes hormonal contraceptive pills, IUDs and mifepristone. Emergency contraceptive pills can be both hormonal pills of different kinds and also mifepristone, because they are also pills”

The phrase "emergency contraceptive pills (also called morning-after pills)." has been replaced with "hormonal contraceptive pills (also called morning-after pills)." to conform with the correct definitions of the terms as suggested (paragraph 1, Background).

5. “The authors state that an important proportion of maternal deaths in Asia, Africa and Russia occur in relation to induced abortion. But are these unsafe or legal abortions in the health care systems?”

There are unsafe abortions. "unsafe" has been added to clarify the doubt. Thanks.
6. “I do not think drugs brand names should appear in scientific papers. Use generic names of drugs and mention that there are two trademarks approved in the country.”

This has been corrected. Thanks.

7. “Are abortions legal or illegal in Cameroon? What is known about the number of abortions?”

In Cameroon, abortions are illegal and the actual numbers of abortions per year is not known, although there is a fairly good estimate of the number of deaths from abortion. This explanation has been added in the Background (paragraph 4). Thanks

Methods

8. “The sample is unclear. In abstract it is called random but in the methods section it is called convenience. Please explain”

It was a convenience sample. The abstract and methods section have been corrected accordingly. Thanks.

9. “How were students invited? Were all the 7000 invited? Why is it mentioned that 500 live in the dormitories? It is stated that all students who gave their consent were eligible, but who had the opportunity? Those who were in the campus? Where were all the other students?”

The students who participated were those who were in the campus that day, irrespective of whether they live in the campus or out of campus. This has been clarified under “study population and sampling”. The phrase on the number of students who lived in the dormitories has been removed. Thanks.

10. “Why include a power analysis when it appears that the study was conducted by just asking everyone present on one occasion to participate? What was the expected variance based on?”

The power analysis has been deleted because it is irrelevant here. Thanks for the observation.

11. “Why were no tests regarding statistical differences conducted? In the result as well as in the tables results have been presented by gender groups, by students with adequate and inadequate knowledge and by ECP users vs non-users but no tests regarding differences have been conducted. I suggest that those should be done and shown in the tables.”

Appropriate tests of statistical significance have been conducted, the results reported Tables 3 and 5. Thanks

Results
12. “Results are presented both in tables and texts. I suggest that the author choose either text or tables with just the referral or explanatory sentences to the tables in the text.”

This has been done. Thanks.

Discussion

13. “The part on Synergon is not clear. Is Synergon used to induce abortion?”

Synergon is not manufactured for abortion purposes. However, it is frequently used for this purpose during illegal abortion in Cameroon. Whether it is effective as an abortifacient is not known. This explanation has been added in the discussion. Thanks.

References

14. “References are few and could be expanded and updated. Much research has been done on ECP later than references in the paper in the countries as UK, Sweden etc. There are also some reviews that could be included.”

References have been expanded and updated. A recent Cochrane review has been added. Thanks.

Minor Essential revisions

15. “The conclusion in the abstract is different from the conclusion in the paper in that the information sources mentioned are different.”

This has been corrected. Thanks.

17. “How was the questionnaire amended after the pre-testing and how was the pre-testing done?”

We have now explained how the pre-testing was done, and also explained the subsequent amendment to the questionnaire. Thanks.

18. “The questionnaire had been used in other countries but no reference is provided. Please add!”

The reference has been added. Thanks.

19. “Discussion: The authors state that one limitation is convenience sampling. What are the other?”

This has been added. Thanks.

Discretionary revisions
20. “Are authors contributing only to the final approval of the manuscript entitled to be in the authors list?”

Thank you for raising this issue. Actually, all authors contributed important intellectual content to the article, and read and approved the final version of the manuscript. We have now made this point clear in the authors’ contribution.