Author's response to reviews

Title: Motivational brief intervention for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections in travelers: a randomized controlled trial

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Madam, dear Sir,

We thank you for having submitted our manuscript to 2 reviewers. We revised the article taking into consideration all the comments of the reviewers. Please find hereby our responses point by point:

a) Reviewer 1

**Major compulsory revisions**

1. As the trial was stopped early, with only half the predefined sample size recruited a futility analysis should be done if the authors wish to state that continuing recruitment is unlikely to alter the outcome.
   The results of a futility analysis were added in the Discussion (Strengths and limitations)

2. As there was a significant difference between the groups regarding reported past history of an STI, this potential confounder should be controlled for in the primary outcome analysis.
   The primary outcome was re-analysed after stratification of the subjects into two groups with and without past history of STI.

3. The method describes a “multivariate analysis for predictors of unprotected sexual intercourse”, yet table 2 report factors associated with casual partners rather than unprotected sexual intercourse. The analysis presented in table two would be better with unprotected sex as the outcome variable as described in the method.
   Table 2 was modified and the figures for unprotected sexual intercourse were added. A paragraph was also added in the “Result” section. Changes were also done to the text in general to focus more on unprotected casual sex intercourses

4. The study is not robust enough to support the concluding paragraph, particularly the first sentence.
   The concluding paragraph was modified

**Minor essential revisions**

1. The abbreviated form of 95% confidence interval is inconsistent throughout.
   Changed

2. Abstract paragraph 2 line 11 – should state fewer women sex with a new partner abroad rather than unspecified sexual intercourse.
   Changed

3. Introduction paragraph 4 line 2 should be “associated with”.
   Changed

4. Method paragraph 2 line 4 should be travel clinic provides.
   Changed

5. Method paragraph 3 line 4 should be giving too much.
   Changed
6. Method paragraph 4 line 4 the terms “motivational BI” and BI are used interchangeably throughout.
   Changed

7. Sample size calculation line 4 - as described above more detail is needed about the interim analysis performed
   We added a futility analysis as proposed in the article of Lachin et al.

8. Randomization line 1 and 2 – “clinical staff members”, or a “member of staff”.
   Changed

9. Results paragraph 1 line 2 – 1681 travelers completed.
   Changed

10. Results paragraph 2 line 3 – “the staff”.
    Changed

11. Discussion paragraph 2 repeats much of the introduction. We don’t really agree with the reviewer.
    Discussion paragraph 2 was shortened

12. Discussion paragraph 2 line 1 BI is “more effective” - than what?
    Changed

13. The discussion of internal and external validity is split between paragraphs 4 and 5 making it difficult to follow. There is no mention of social desirability self report bias
    These two paragraphs have been modified

14. Discussion paragraph 4 line 5 – missing reference
    The corresponding sentence has been deleted, because our statement was not correct. Additional analysis showed that the predictors of sex during travel were not the same as for unprotected sex.

15. Discussion paragraph 4 line 9 – should be ”thus reducing”.
    Changed

16. Discussion paragraph 4 line 11 – As the study does not provide data on female condoms they shouldn’t be mentioned, or provide reference supporting the acceptance or effectiveness of promoting female condom to female travellers.
    Changed

17. Discussion paragraph 5 line 5 – missing s on travellers, cannot make statement that increasing sample size is unlikely to have altered outcome without further analysis
    Further analysis was done.

18. References – 1, 2, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 – have incorrect formatting for a variety of reasons.
    Changed
19. Table 1 – how was regular alcohol use define.
Changed

**Discretionary revisions**

1. Introduction paragraph 2 – the switch between data relating specifically to travellers and that of the general population is confusing. Line 12 – it is unclear what “this lack of effectiveness” is referring to.
Changed

2. Outcomes line 1 and 3 – prevalence might be better worded as proportion; lonely might be better worded as travelling without a regular sexual partner. Changed

3. Results paragraph 7 – it is unclear what is pre-travel versus post travel data, baseline data could be groups more clearly.
Changed

4. Results paragraph 8 – this is the primary analysis but it is difficult to find currently and might be better moved before the secondary analysis reported in paragraph 6.
We disagree with the reviewer on this point. We feel that it is appropriate to report the results in the order of decreasing number of subjects.

5. Results paragraph 9 line 1 – needs to specific with a new partner.
Changed

6. Discussion paragraph 1 line 1 – is it travelling without a regular partner or alone?
Changed

b) Reviewer 2
The second reviewer didn’t have any specific comments.

Furthermore we discovered a minor error with the figures reported in table 3. These figures were therefore corrected.

We hope that the changes done to the manuscript will satisfy you and the reviewers.

Yours sincerely

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