Author's response to reviews

Title: What do young adults know about the HIV/AIDS epidemic: Findings from a population based study in Karachi, Pakistan.

Authors:

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Version: 2 Date: 23 February 2009

Author's response to reviews: see over
Covering letter:

Please find the point wise responses to the reviewer’s comments as they appear in reviewer’s report.

Comments and responses to “Reviewer’s report 1”

Title: Adolescents’ level of knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS: a risk factor for an up-coming epidemic? Findings from a population-based study in Karachi, Pakistan
Version: 1 Date: 4 December 2008
Reviewer: Helena Palmgren

Reviewer’s report:
Major Compulsory Revisions: None
Minor Essential Revisions: I have found none

Directory revisions:

1. Title. My suggestion is that you take out "a risk factor for an upcoming epidemic". It makes the title not really logical, even if I understand that you will make this point. An alternative is to give it a new title.

Response: The newer title is as follows.

What do young adults know about the HIV/AIDS epidemic: Findings from a population based study in Karachi, Pakistan.

2. Discussion and Conclusions a little "too much words". Could be more stringent.

Response: The language has been revised, sentences deleted and the language made more stringent.

3. You use the word "however" too often.

Response: I agree the word however was used 18 times in the manuscript, after revisions, these have been considerably reduced.

4. Too much of the data in tables. Could tables 4-6 be visualized in graphs instead?

Response: Tables 3-4 are now in graphical form, whereas table 6 (now table 3) depicts bivariate analysis which is more explanatory in tabular form.
**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests.

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**Comments and responses to “Reviewer’s report 2”**

**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Adolescents’ level of knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS: a risk factor for an up-coming epidemic? Findings from a population-based study in Karachi, Pakistan

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 4 December 2008

**Reviewer:** Olive O Shisana

**Reviewer’s report:**

The study that led to this paper is well conducted and well presented. The article may be relevant for Pakistan where HIV prevalence is low and most people still need to be made aware of the epidemic. However, outside of Pakistan, the subject has been well studied and most scientists have gone beyond knowledge, particularly that knowledge on its own is not sufficient to change behaviour.

1. The statement on page 15 lines 9 and 10 that “we believe limited knowledge about the spread or prevention of HIV/AIDS will have an effect on health behaviour” needs to be amended to recognise that the path from knowledge to behaviour change is complex, often moderated by a number of variables. The authors could benefit from reviewing and referencing articles on knowledge, attitudes, practice and behaviour conducted in the 1990’s.

   **Response:**
   *We agree with the comment, the mentioned sentence is removed and a statement is added on knowledge and behavior on page 18 with a reference as suggested. This is also pointed at in the Conclusions section.*

2. Moreover, the measures of knowledge seem to be limited, even though I would agree with the open-ended form of asking the question. It shows that knowledge is limited.

   **Response:** *Open added response always gives you first hand information without prompts.*
3. The authors missed the opportunity to use the gender lens in framing the problem of differential access to knowledge, though in the discussion they return to this. A theoretical explanation of why gender is crucial in accessing knowledge on HIV would strengthen the paper.

Response: A short para in the Background section hint at the different conditions males and females have to face in countries where males are of a higher status than females and where access to contraceptives and treatments rest with the women. In the discussion section it is discussed about the different opportunities for males and females.

4. The authors may want to refer to the 17 to 21 year olds as adults rather than girls and boys. It is often practice in the literature on HIV for persons aged 15 to 49 to be considered adults, even though there are some who are still teenagers.

Response: We agreed and the suggested changes have been made about the age group. We are now calling them ‘young adults’ and the words, ‘boys’ and ‘girls’ have been replaced by ‘males’ and ‘females’ respectively.

5. On page 7 the 4th and 5th line present two categories that are compared but are not mutually exclusive. That needs to be corrected.

Response: These categories are mutually exclusive, to clarify, ‘some knowledge’ has been defined as exactly one of the variables has at least one correct answer, whereas in ‘good knowledge’ both variables must have at least one correct answer. This is clarified in the manuscript by putting a word ‘exactly’ when ‘some knowledge’ is defined.

I suggest that the paper be revised and resubmitted for publication.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.