Author's response to reviews

Title: Male partner participation in skilled antenatal care in peri-urban Gulu district, Northern Uganda

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Author's response to reviews: see over
19th April 2010

To: BMC Editorial Team

From: Raymond Tweheyo and co-authors

RE: REVISIONS TO MANUSCRIPT FOLLOWING GUIDANCE OF THE REVIEWERS

MS: 785742533513188 – Determinants of male partner participation in skilled antenatal care in peri-urban Gulu district, Northern Uganda.

Dear Editorial team, we thank you for the reviews and allowing us the opportunity to submit a revised copy of our manuscript.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS OF Referee 1:

http://www.biomedcentral.com/imedia/6263020503574344_comment.pdf

Comment #1 on use of the term ‘Determinants’ while reporting findings from a cross-sectional study.

We have omitted ‘determinants’ throughout the manuscript and referred to ‘factors associated with’ because of inability to infer causation from a cross sectional design.

Comment #2 about reports of Maternal Mortality Ratio in districts neighbouring Gulu.

We included this information in the background.

‘According to Gulu development plan (2007), the district has a maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of 700/100,000; infant mortality rate of 172/1,000 and ANC HIV seroprevalence of 8.8% [21]. Gulu district MMR is similar to other districts in Northern Uganda with an MMR averaging 650/100,000 but, higher than neighbouring post-conflict affected Adjumani district in West Nile where the MMR is estimated at 550/100,000’ [21].

Comment #3 about reporting controlling for factors that were biologically plausible instead of socially plausible.

We adopted the suggestion.

Comment #4 about referring to tables by page numbers.

We have referred to all tables by their respective numbers.

Comment #5 about knowledge of ANC services being associated with increased male attendance, instead of the alternative interpretation that male attendance at ANC is associated with higher level of knowledge & Comment #6 about obtaining health information from health professionals found associated with increased ANC attendance,
instead of the alternative interpretation where increased ANC attendance is associated with obtaining health information from health professionals.

We agree that the latter is the alternative explanation for this finding. We acknowledge the limitation of the study design we used, where we cannot make inference about the cause and effect.

Comment #7 about use of the words ‘spiritually or culturally’ inseated of ‘legally married’. We adopted the suggested change.

Comment #8 about reasons for the difference between male ANC participation rates reported by the survey and by the HMIS records.

We have provided more information in the background about the ANC participation rate in Omoro county (42%), reported by the HMIS and PMTCT records of 2008, compared to 65.4% rate computed from our survey. We also report that our sample was peri-urban and possibly with better access to ANC/PMTCT services compared to the general district population.

Comment #9 about the complex paragraph referring to HIV discordance and ease of introduction of condoms as a preventive method.

We have simplified the statement and mentioned that ‘In case of couples that are HIV discordant, male participation presents the opportunity for health providers to promote use of barrier contraceptive methods such as condoms.’

Comment #10 about the incomplete Reference 26.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS FROM Referee 2:
http://www.biomedcentral.com/imedia/1041780457367137_comment.pdf

Comment #1 about the incomplete reference

We have corrected the error by completing the reference as requested to read

RESPONSE TO ASSOCIATE EDITOR’s COMMENTS in email dated 29th March 2010

Comment #1 about a poorly written introduction section.

We have revised the introduction section, while citing literature that proposes that male participation may be beneficial to child and maternal health outcomes. We also cite evidence in support of these suggestions, from limited intervention studies.

Comment #2 about the need for better proof-reading.

We involved a copy-editor that read through the final draft of our manuscript. The current version has taken into account the changes provided by the copy-editor. We believe that it has minimal errors if any.

Comment #3 about the need to upload a copy of the questionnaire as an additional file.

A copy of the English questionnaire is attached to the submitted files.

We thank you for all the review and editorial comments and hope to hear from you in the near future,

Yours sincerely,

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