Author’s response to reviews

Title: Improved pregnancy outcome in refugees and migrants despite low literacy on the Thai-Burmese border: results of three cross-sectional surveys

Authors:

Verena I Carrara (verena@shoklo-unit.com)
Celia Hogan (celiahogan@hotmail.com)
Cecilia De Pree (familledepree@yahoo.fr)
Francois Nosten (francois@tropmedres.ac)
Rose McGready (rose@shoklo-unit.com)

Version: 2 Date: 7 March 2011

Author’s response to reviews: see over
Mae Sot, 06 March 2011

To the BioMed Central Editorial Team of the “BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth”

Please find below our reply to the reviewers for the submitted article entitled:

“Improved pregnancy outcome despite low literacy on the Thai-Burmese border: results of three cross-sectional surveys” (MS ID: 7421025504836686)

We thank the reviewers for their detailed suggestions for this manuscript.

Referee 1:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The methods section needs to be completely re-written

Suggestions of the reviewer have been taken into account and the methods section has been rewritten to include them.

objectives of your study see methods, Objectives

da description of the study population (ethnic groups, residence inside or outside camps, age range, eligibility criteria for participation in study, etc.), see methods, Study area and Survey Participants

the dates and duration of each phase of study, how were data collected, see methods, Enrolment criteria

how was consent for participation taken, what was done when a woman refused to participate, see methods, Eligibility for participation

how data were entered in a database; see Methods, excel spreadsheet with double data entry

with regard to data analysis, be more specific on which variable were subjected to what analysis (e.g., the mean value, the SD and the 95% confidence intervals were computed for age) etc. see methods

Part of the Wellcome-Trust Mahidol University-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Programme

Shoklo Malaria Research Unit
P.O.Box 46
Mae Sod, Tak 63110
Thailand
Tel: 66 55 545 021
Fax: 66 55 545 020
e-mail: smru@tropmedres.ac
http://www.shoklo-unit.com
Some information needs to be moved from Results section into Methods section, e.g., describe your study groups in the Methods section (women living in camps and those living outside camps). See methods, Study area and survey participants.

2. The results section needs to be reorganized, synthesized or summarized
Please synthesize or summarize your results and do not just repeat what is in the table. Readers should be able to look at the tables first and then read the text to get further explanation of the findings. We have re-written the results section as suggested. Tables and figures are referenced into the text. Results have been re-written to avoid duplication with data available in the tables and to highlight important findings.

Figures should have titles that describe what is being presented. Figures titles have been completed for better understanding.

Table 2 needs better presentation (e.g., put smokers and non-smokers percentages in a panel one above other, rather than in columns; columns should read as 'percent able to read' etc.). The table title should also describe what the 'relative risk' means, but please note that the estimates shown are actually odds ratio and not relative risk. Same suggestions apply to Table 4. Table 2 and table 4 have been reformatted to include OR and AOR with 95% CI as suggested.

Minor Essential Revisions

3. Highlight the study objective in the intro/background
The introduction has been modified to emphasize more the effects of literacy on pregnancy outcomes and problems faced in this specific area. See last sentence of Intro and first paragraph of methods.

4. The rather unconventional method to determine 'literacy' used in this study should also be explained and supported with data from previous studies.
See methods, Literacy assessment, The methods of literacy evaluation used is now explained in relation with the context, but has been developed more in the methods section and the discussion rather than in the introduction.

5. Justification of comparing data from different time periods should be provided. How was the study population different in these groups (esp. in 1995 and 2003). Were participants selected only from those visiting the clinics? Was any effort made to include those who did not visit the clinics?
There were no obvious changes in the population living conditions or ethnicity; we have added a population description in the methods. The long time frame between surveys has been discussed further in the constraints to the study results. Patients were only those present during ANC at time of survey; ANC coverage in the refugee camps was high (over 80%) and we are confident results represent the level of literacy among pregnant women living in refugee camps; ANC coverage among migrant workers is unfortunately unknown, but uptake is increasing steadily. We haven’t unfortunately conducted any literacy survey among the non-pregnant migrant workers (both sexes) seeking care in our clinics which could have also given some further information and this has been included in the weaknesses of the study.

6. List of constraints/weaknesses to add in the discussion
Study limitations have been described in the discussion, including the possible changes in socio-economic conditions over time, the unconventional method to determine literacy, or the lack of comparative with other populations living in the same area.

Discretionary Revisions:

7. Re-analyzed and introducing in the model variables in univariate analysis with p<0.10.
3 variables associated with LBW had a p value between 0.05 and 0.1 in univariate analysis. Those variables have been included in the regression model as suggested; final results remained similar to the previous model.

8. Removing the 1995 data of the villages
We agree with the reviewer, those data are of little relevance for the study and have been removed.

9. Comparison between camp and migrant population
Camp and migrant population are very similar and a more detailed description has been provided in the methods and the discussion.

Referee 2:

1. The question is defined but lost its essence at some places where educational level got the lead
We agree and have modified the manuscript accordingly. For discussion focuses on literacy impact on birth outcomes.

2. Procedure of collecting the data is obscure
The last sentence of ethics statement in the methods explains the pregnancy records. The first sentence of statistical analysis explains data collection for the literacy part.
3. Results of multivariate analysis is not here
We have included the AOR of the 2 multivariate analyses in table 2 and 4 for clarification. In the results section, main results of each multivariate analysis are summarized.

4. Discussion has lost tracks many times and not focused on the issue
We agree and have re-written the discussion to focus on literacy impact on birth outcomes. We also have highlighted the importance of education for IEC materials as suggested.

5. Title could explain the study population and abstract needs more results like results of association of all outcomes and literacy in terms of univariate and multivariate analysis.
We have modified and completed the abstract as suggested. We also have modified the title to explain the study population

6. Statistics: They did a lot statistical tests some of which seems irrelevant, like tests for language known over time and sites, Logistic regression for hospital delivery which indicates that which one is important for study does not get attention. All Tables are not mentioned in Result section.
We agree and we have re-written the results section; we have removed all information duplicating the results of the tables of not relevant enough and highlighted important findings. Tables and figures are referenced into the text. Hospital delivery is now emphasized.

7. Extensive editing necessary
One English native speaker has reviewed and edited the entire manuscript.