Author's response to reviews

Title: Predictors of antenatal mental illness in West Africa: A cross-sectional survey.

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Version: 2 Date: 26 September 2011

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir/ Madame

We are extremely grateful to the reviewers for their thoughtful and constructive criticisms of our paper. Having reflected on their comments we have redrafted our paper accordingly. Below are point by point responses to the recommendations.

We are confident that the reviewer's suggestions and our responses have strengthened our paper. Our team would of course be prepared to make further revisions if felt appropriate by the reviewers or the editorial board.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Jim Crabb
Dr Bola Ola
Dr Selena Gleadoware
Dr Arup Dhar
Dr Rajeev Krishnadas
Reviewer: Sonya Jakubec

Specific Review Points

Discretionary revisions:
1. The research question (predictors of antenatal mental illness) is evident; however a clear statement of the theoretical basis (psychiatric epidemiology) would add clarity about the study’s purpose and framework. This description could fit in the background of the study.

   This has been done. Please see last paragraph of the background section in the main body of the text.

2. Methods (Prospective survey design with direct logistic regression assessing a number of variables) are appropriate and well described. Additionally, methods of sampling and measures are well described and, for the most part, sound. The reliability of measurement strategies is clearly outlined and strong rationale is provided from the literature. Measurement/item biases overall are well discussed (note: this could be emphasized a bit more in the limitations section). Sampling bias is noted, though since findings are not representative, the demographic considerations pertinent to the sample could be more fully discussed (see 5 – discussion/conclusions).

   The limitations discussion has been expanded as recommended

3. Discussion and conclusions are balanced, trustworthy and adequately supported by the data and literature. Limitations are discussed; however the role of sampling bias in the findings and threats to external validity could be more fully discussed. For instance the sample were volunteers from an urban health centre in the capital city, and the role of this particular sample and distinct characteristics of this group could go a long way to explain some of the findings. It would be useful to hear more recommendations for mental health
promotion based upon the findings re) domestic violence and previous girl children.

This has been clarified and expanded in the final paragraph of the conclusion

4. Limitations are well stated. As mentioned above however, a fuller description of the sampling bias will strengthen this section, and focus the conclusions/recommendations.

The limitations discussion has been expanded as recommended

Required Revisions (Minor language issues not for publication):

1. In the Abstract, the first sentence of Methods requires a compound to the verb conducted. So: A prospective survey design was conducted in Lagos.

Revision made as suggested by the reviewer

2. In the main body of the paper, in the Methods section the 8th sentence demands a grammatical edit: Either: We estimated sample size using methods proposed by Daniel. Or: We estimated sample size using a method proposed by Daniel.

Revision made as suggested by the reviewer

3. In the Discussion section of the body of the manuscript, the first sentence of the 2nd paragraph requires a language edit: With regards to anxiety symptoms our results were lower than another study by the same Adewuya et al which found... Suggest change to remove “the same”, to read:

With regards to anxiety symptoms our results were lower than another study by Adewuya et al which found...
Revision made as suggested by the reviewer

4. In the final paragraph of the Discussion, the 3rd sentence reads: Bivariate studies have shown a small association between domestic violence and depressive symptoms whilst multivariate studies a small to medium association. Would change to: Bivariate studies have shown a small association between domestic violence and depressive symptoms whilst multivariate studies show a small to medium association.

Revision made as suggested by the reviewer
Reviewer: Gerard A Hutchinson

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions-

1. a more detailed discussion of the effectiveness of the SRQ-20 in this population and its limitations especially since such a low rate of caseness was found.

This has been done in the first paragraph of the limitations section.

2. Would suggest a less bold title than predictors of mental illness- the SRQ 20 is a screening instrument - perhaps factors associated with mental health disorders

Revision made as suggested by the reviewer

3. a more detailed explanation for the low rates as compared to previous studies, especially as the suggestion of stigma is confounded by the sample coming from a medical clinic in an urban environment, some references to support the arguments would also be useful.

This has been done. Please see limitations section

Minor revisions –

1. Correction of typos eg pg 8 2nd para there was a difference instead of there were.

Revision made as suggested by the reviewer.
2. Last line of p11 this instead of his

Revision made as suggested by the reviewer.