Author's response to reviews

Title: Causes of perinatal death at a tertiary care hospital in Northern Tanzania 2000-2010: Registry based study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editors, BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth

RE: MS: 1903851561759725

Regarding your concern about our manuscript entitled "Causes of perinatal death at a tertiary care hospital in Northern Tanzania 2000-2010: Registry based study", we have now revised the manuscript by including a reference to our previously submitted paper in BMC Paediatrics entitled "Cause-specific neonatal mortality in a neonatal care unit in Northern Tanzania: A registry based cohort study". We have added the reference (20) in the Methods section on page 6 under study population, on page 7 under data collection, on page 8 under variable definition, as well as in the Discussion on page 12 under unexplained asphyxia.

We look forward to hearing from you soon. All co-authors are informed about the revision and have received the final manuscript.

Sincerely,

Blandina Theophil Mmbaga
Editors concern on paper submitted to BMC and response

1. In the current submission, you state that the data analyzed represents “1958 stillbirths and early neonatal deaths... between July 2000 and October 2010”. In your submission to BMC Pediatrics, you state that the data analyzed represent “5033 inborn neonates admitted to a neonatal care unit (NCU) from 2000 to 2010”. Could you please clarify if there is any overlap in these two sample populations?

Response: The primary database used in the two studies is the same; births at KCMC from July 2000 to October 2010. However, the study populations in the two papers are different.

The previous paper submitted to BMC paediatrics is based on 5033 inborn neonates who were admitted to the neonatal care unit at KCMC during the study period. We studied causes of death among the 536 neonates who died neonatally.

In the current submission we study perinatal mortality. Hence, in addition to the 536 neonates, we include 248 liveborn infants who died immediately after birth while still in labour ward, as well as 1219 stillbirths.

2. Could you please explain how the current submission represents an advance over your earlier submission?

Response: The earlier submission focused on cause-specific neonatal mortality in relation to the newborn’s condition and clinical diagnosis in a neonatal care unit where they were admitted and treated.

The current submission focuses on causes of perinatal mortality in relation to maternal diseases, obstetric complications, fetal and newborn conditions. This gives additional information to monitor causes of perinatal mortality and for preventive measures to reduce perinatal deaths.

3. Could you please clarify why you did not cite your earlier submission, or mention it in the cover letter that accompanied the current submission?

Response: We did not consider a reference because the paper was still under review. We have now included a reference to the earlier submission in the current manuscript, see our revised manuscript.