Author's response to reviews

Title: An implementation evaluation of a policy aiming to improve financial access to maternal health care in Djibo district, Burkina Faso

Authors:

Loubna Belaid (loubna.belaid@umontreal.ca)
Valéry Ridde (valery.ridde@umontreal.ca)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to reviewer’s comments

Comments reviewer 1

Remove the space between numbers and % (e.g. page 6 and Figure).

Thank you for this comment. It was done in the whole manuscript.

Capitalize for example Millennium Development Goals and Ministry of Health.

Thank you for this comment. It was done in the whole manuscript.

The official plural of Euro is Euro.

Thank you for this comment. We have made the change.

Use systematically decimal points (e.g. page 13: 5.5 Euro instead of 5,5 Euros).

Thank you, it is done in the whole manuscript.

Page 7: The sentence after 'The main source of funding is the state budget' should be removed.

Thank you for this comment. The sentence was removed.

Page 14: It would be better to use 50 000 million CFA (76.2 million Euro)

Thank you for this comment. We made the changes.

Page 15: The same comment: 6 million CFA (91 500 Euro).

Thank you for this comment. We made the changes.

Page 22: (health centre 2) instead of ( health centre 2 ).

Thank you for this comment. It is done in the whole manuscript.

Page 23: (Table 2) instead of (Table.2).

Thank you for this comment. It is done in the whole manuscript.

Double-check the name of journal in references 24 and 57.

Thank you for this comment. We checked the name of journal.

Consider translation of article titles for those given in French.

Thank you for this comment. The translation of French titles to English was performed and integrated on the bibliography.
Comments reviewer 2

Abstract, background: This section creates the impression as if “the national health policy … designed to boost the assisted delivery rate.” consisted only of the following: “The worst-off are exempted from all fees.” But the policy provides subsidies much more comprehensively; the exemption is only one element of it. The policy should be described more adequately.

Thank you for this comment. We changed the sentence as it follows: “To bring down its high maternal mortality ratio, Burkina Faso adopted a national health policy in 2007 designed to boost the assisted delivery rate and emergency obstetrical and neonatal care. The cost of transportation from health centres to district hospitals is paid by the policy. The worst-off are exempted from all fees.”

Abstract, results: “All the activities were implemented as planned except for completely subsidizing the worst-off, and some activities such as surveys for patients and the quality assurance service team aiming to improve quality of care.” Without actually reading the paper this is very difficult to understand. What are “all the activities”? These sentences may become clearer when the background section of the abstract has been revised.

Thank you for this comment. As we added additional information on the background section this sentence becomes clearer. To bring down its high maternal mortality ratio, Burkina Faso adopted a national health policy in 2007 designed to boost the assisted delivery rate and emergency obstetric and neonatal care care. The cost of transportation from health centres to district hospitals is paid by the policy. The worst-off are exempted from all fees.

The grant for the worst-off: “A budget from the national subsidy obstetric care policy of 5000000000 CFA (76,224,509 Euros) was planned”. The readability of such large figures must be improved: “50,000,000,000 CFA (76.2 million Euros).”

Thank you for this comment. We changed the statement as it follows: A budget from the national subsidy obstetric care policy of 50000 million CFA (76.2 million Euros) was planned to fund the poorest patients.

The reimbursement system: Replace “dystocia labour” by “dystocic labour”

Thank you for this comment. We replaced the term.

Transportation: “The outstanding amount, supported by the district hospital, is estimated at 6000000 CFA (91469 Euros).” Improve readability: “The outstanding amount, supported by the district hospital, is estimated at 6,000,000 CFA (91,469 Euros).”

Thank you for this comment. We changed the statement as it follows: The outstanding amount, supported by the district hospital, is estimated at 6 million CFA (91 500 Euro).

The benefits of evaluating the implementation process: “problems with entering data on the software, resulting on long delays in reimbursement.” Change to “problem with using the software for data entry, resulting in long delays in reimbursement.”

Thank you for this comment. We changed the statement as it was recommended.
Discretionary Revisions

Title: “An implementation evaluation of a policy aiming to improve financial access to maternal health care in Burkina Faso” Since the evaluation was carried out in sex health centres of one district only, and the reservations the authors express about the generalizability of the results, there is a certain mismatch between the title and the study’s limited geographical scope. Consider rephrasing “An implementation evaluation of a policy aiming to improve financial access to maternal health care in Djibo district, Burkina Faso”

Thank you for this comment. We approved it. We changed the title as it follows: An implementation evaluation of a policy aiming to improve financial access to maternal health care in Djibo district, Burkina Faso

Quality of care: “Health workers are supposed to conduct surveys of patients to assess quality of care in health centres”. Could it be explained a bit more what these surveys should look like? Audits or case reviews based on the records? Patient interviews? And what does “surveys of the beneficiary population” mean interviews of community members served by the health facilities?

Thank you for this comment. For the question: Could it be explained a bit more what these surveys should look like?

All documents on this policy that we have consulted, the only information found in the survey is the execution of the survey by head nurses to beneficiaries. However, in a national document of the Ministry of Health, one of the objectives to improve the quality of care is sensitized people to the concept of ‘quality of care’. But no sample questionnaire there appears in this document.

Audits or case reviews based on the records?

Audits are based on records.

And what does “surveys of the beneficiary population” mean interviews of community members served by the health facilities?

The only information that we have found on the survey is that nurses in health centres were supposed to conduct surveys to assess the quality of care perceived by communities. However, no information was given on how to do this survey and what dimensions of quality of care was targeted on the survey.

Supplies and equipment: “no gloves for revision” consider changing for clarity to: “no gloves for revision [of the uterus]”

Thank you for this comment. The change was done.

Traditional birth attendants…: “They feel useless and excluded from the activities of the health centre. Therefore, they feel discouraged from participating in the health centre’s activities.” The second sentence seems redundant – consider deleting it.

Thank you for this comment. The sentence was removed.