Author's response to reviews

Title: Maternal near miss and quality of maternal health care in Iraq

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Author's response to reviews: see over
November 2nd, 2012

Dear Editor-in-Chief,

Enclosed is our revised paper, entitled “Maternal Near Miss and Quality of Maternal Health Care in Iraq”.

Again, we would like to thank the peer reviewers for their comments. As you will see in our responses, we have incorporated all of the issues raised by the reviewer.

We look forward to receiving your decision on our paper.

Kind regards,

On behalf of the co-authors

Özge Tunçalp MD PhD
Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Reviewer: Matthias Borchert

(1) I still think that all indicators used in the results section need to be introduced and explained in the methods section, or in box 1, or in a supplementary box. I think it is a valuable principle in scientific writing that first methods are described and explained, before results are reported that are generated by these methods. Why make an exception in this paper, and introduce indicators in the results section? If the authors think this would make box 1 too unwieldy, this should consider a supplementary box. The paper can only win by such enhanced transparency.

*Although we briefly mention all of the indicators in our Methods section, we agreed with the reviewer and added them in Box 1.*

(2) The authors should elaborate on the "convenience sampling" they used. What prevented them from obtaining a representative sample of eligible hospitals costs? distance? security? better access because of personal relationships with staff? Out of how many eligible hospitals were the six hospitals selected? How, according to the authors, may this sampling method have biased the results?

*We have clarified this issue with our co-authors and modified the text accordingly. The hospitals included in our study are ALL the public hospitals in Baghdad with more than 1000 deliveries/year and are distributed all over the city.*

(3) The authors appropriately state: "Our study was conducted in only six hospitals in Baghdad; therefore our results cannot be generalized to the overall country." This limitation should be reflected in the title: Instead of "Maternal near miss and quality of maternal health care in Iraq" it would be preferable to write "Maternal near miss and quality of maternal health care in Baghdad, Iraq"

*We agreed with the reviewer and edited our title and relevant text throughout the paper accordingly.*