Title: Factors associated with obstetric fistulae occurrence among patients attending selected hospitals in Kenya, 2010: A case control study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor(s)

We would like to greatly appreciate the reviewers who have spent great deal of their time to review our documents. We appreciate their great comments and we have addressed the comments as below:

1. Reviewer 1 (Zahida Qureishi) comments:

   Introduction section, Line 3, “They are considered as ‘near miss death’” deleted and substituted with “Some women with obstetric fistula can have near miss morbidity”

   Method section: we apologize for the wrong statement and delete line 7 and substitute with “the fistula clinic at Kenyatta National Hospital has been operating since 1994. In 2009, fistula surgeries have been subsidized courtesy to collaboration with Africa Medical Research Foundation AMREF).”

   Table three, the data on female circumcision has been removed from the table.

2. Reviewer 2 (David A Eschenbach) comments:

   The marital status in this study is the status as of the time of data collection but the women with fistula who answered YES to being divorced, were further asked whether the divorce was attributed to the fistula and all of them answered positively to this question. This together with the fact that 34% of cases report to have stopped working after onset of symptoms of fistula(as indicated in the results section) show the social effect of obstetrics fistula among women. I have indicated this in paragraph 8 of discussion.

   We have given a breakdown of the cases and control by age groups at marriage and age-group at first childbirth as shown in the table 2.

   The new table 3 shows distribution of fistula cases by age-group and parity. This is also indicated in the result section paragraph 4.
It is true that all controls were taller than 150 cm while 56% of cases were taller than 150cm. This was added into the final model but was not significant and this could be due to the fact that the controls were all taller than 150 and the figure for <150cm was zero (0). On advise of a statistician, this was left out of the final model and stated as a limitation.

We have considered the age cut off of 15 years in the final model for age at first child birth and age at marriage and it was not significant for both instances.

We agree with the limitations put forward by the reviewer and have added them in the section of the methodological considerations.

Thank you and looking forward to your positive response.

Yours Sincerely

Dr. Zeinab Gura
Principal investigator