Author’s response to reviews

Title: Predictors of labor abnormalities in university hospital: unmatched case control study

Authors:

Wayou Abraham (wayouabraham@gmail.com)
Yifru Berhan (yifrub@yahoo.com)

Version: 6 Date: 9 April 2014

Author’s response to reviews:

Authors’ Response to Review # 2 Comments

Title: Predictors of labor abnormalities in university hospital: unmatched case control study

General:
We would like to say thank you for giving us your time to review this manuscript.

Specific:

Comment: 1.1 “The process of randomization needs more details. How did they ensure a 1:1 ratio of controls and cases? How did they differentiate cases from controls using a delivery registry book which does not usually include all the detailed information about labor and delivery?

Response:
Actually, this was not a randomized study; cases and controls were defined from the outset. The 1:1 ratio was our assumption during sample size determination; and it was not a matched case-control study as stated in the title and methods section. As described in the methods section under the subheading of SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING (paragraph 7 of the new version), the delivery registry book was not the source of data. We used the delivery registry book to select and access study cases and controls. Our data sources were patient charts.

Comment: 1.2 “They need to explicitly mention the eligibility criteria and exclusion criteria in this study: Did they include multiple pregnancies, breech etc? A flow chart could be helpful”.

Response:
As described in methods section under the subheading of SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING (paragraph 6 of the new version), multiple pregnancy was already mentioned as exclusion criteria. Breech was not mentioned because breech is
absolute indication for caesarean section in our hospital protocol. Now, it is noted in paragraph 5 (last statement).

Comment: 1.3 “The authors also need to give details on who does labour assessments and decisions; what their experiences and quality of documentation in that hospital. They should also indicate how they carried quality check of their data”.

Response:
Accepted. It is now described in the methods section under the subheading of STUDY SETTING (paragraph 2 of the revised manuscript). Although the data was based on the most senior person’s evaluation findings, evaluations made by different persons was an advantage to check for the quality of data.

Comment: 1.4 “My advice on study Design: This seems to be analytical cross-sectional rather than case control. They need to analyze and discuss their results accordingly. I do not think there was any randomization in this study”.

Response:
As for comment 1.1.

Comment: 2.1 “Figure 1: This figure is not informative. Proportions should have been better used than absolute numbers for cases. It is unclear what the lines on bar charts Represent”.

Response:
Accepted. The lines were actually to show the standard error. Now, the standard error bars are omitted.

Comment: 2.2 “Table 2: Check some typographic errors that make some of the figures wrong. It is unclear where are primiparous women in this table? Also note some foot note labels are not cited in this table”.

Response:
Since the study was based on intrapartum data, we preferred nulliparous to primiparous (nulliparous - first time pregnancy that reached to term during labor). Now, we realized that it may create further confusion. Therefore, the nulliparous is replaced with primiparous, which will not affect the data. The figures and foot notes are thoroughly checked.

Comment: 2.3 “The retrospective nature of the study is a major limitation but it is not
Discussed
Response:
Accepted.