Author's response to reviews

Title: Perceptions of, attitudes towards and barriers to male involvement in newborn care in rural Ghana, West Africa: a qualitative analysis

Authors:

- Mari Dumbaugh (m.dumbaugh.11@ucl.ac.uk)
- Charlotte Tawiah-Agyemang (charlotte.tawiah@kintampo-hrc.org)
- Alex Manu (makmanu128@gmail.com)
- Guus ten Asbroek (g.tenasbroek@gmail.com)
- Betty Kirkwood (betty.kirkwood@lshtm.ac.uk)
- Zelee Hill (z.hill@ucl.ac.uk)

Version: 3 Date: 21 May 2014

Author's response to reviews: see over
May 16, 2014

To the Editorial Board of BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth:

Thank you for taking the time to review our submission and provide helpful feedback and comments. We believe this manuscript is a strong and necessary contribution to the field of maternal and child health and we are happy to collaborate with you on its publication and dissemination.

Please note that I have changed professional affiliations since the time of first submission. For this publication, however, I wish to continue to be associated with University College London and the Institute for Global Health where I completed the work for this manuscript. All correspondence should now be directed to the address noted above at the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health.

Please allow me to address reviewer comments and note where relevant changes have been made.

- The title and language throughout the paper have been changed from ‘realities’ to ‘perceptions’ to reflect the data collection methods used (interviews and FGDs rather than observation).

- As suggested by both reviewers, details of literature search results are now included in the Background section. Details of literature search methods have been summarized to better fit the nature of the paper.

- Details have been added to the Methods section describing and clarifying data management and analysis as well as participant socio-demographics. Education of participants has been added to Table 1. The high number of participant-identified ethnicities made it difficult to represent this concisely in the table and because data was not analyzed or stratified by ethnicity specifics were not included.

- Other specific points for clarification suggested by reviewers have also been addressed in the Methods section.

- The Results section has been re-structured to reflect the central theme of gender roles and divisions of work, space and responsibility which emerged from our analysis. This theme is
introduced at the beginning of the Results section so the reader understands the emergent framework from the beginning of the section. As suggested, a ‘summary’ of what is to follow in the Results section was also added. I did feel it was necessary to preserve some level of ‘reporting’, however, on each of the coded themes as part of the research question was to identify and then report on current perceptions of male involvement to aid in future intervention development. Higher level themes are explored in depth in the Discussion.

• As suggested by reviewers, additional participant quotations were added to better illustrate identified themes and conclusions including situations when men were involved in labour and birth (begin line 169) and potential negative consequences of male involvement (begin line 383). One of the reviewer’s concerns regarding the lack of women’s voices represented in the Results section is addressed in the paper in the section describing limitations.

• Figure 1 now reflects current analysis only and other higher level themes are brought into the Discussion section.

• Most Minor Essential Revisions were addressed as suggested by reviewers with a few exceptions. For example, the term ‘word of mouth’ was kept in the manuscript as methods for this formative research have been reported as such elsewhere and this is a commonly understood term that most concisely describes recruitment methods in this situation. In addition, one author suggested referring to a particular article to make a point about alternative masculinities and use of violence in pregnancy. The article is indeed relevant however because the publication date for the article is after research/literature reviews for this manuscript were completed I did not feel I could include it without having conducted a more thorough search for updated literature for the whole paper.

Thank you very much again for taking the time to review our paper. We look forward to hearing from you soon and please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or require any further clarification.

Sincerely,

Mari Dumbaugh