Author's response to reviews

Title: Making stillbirths count, making numbers talk - Issues in data collection for stillbirths

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Sir,

First of all, we must thank the reviewers for their positive review and exceptional effort to contribute to the improvement of this paper. With a total of ten pages of suggestions and comments we hope they all find it acceptable that we do not respond in detail sentence by sentence, but rather on the broader topics we have been asked to consider.

A broader review and discussion of how stillbirths are perceived, and how both stillbirths and grief is handled in different cultures and societies is an important subject, but difficult to fit in within the frames of this paper. However, we do agree with Dr. Haws that we did include too little information in our manuscript, and that the reader was left with unsatisfactory concepts of “culture” as a problem. As Dr. Haws points out very appropriately, the manuscript left the impression that a daunting task of “changing culture” would be needed... This is therefore the area where our revised manuscript has been changed most substantially – responding to Dr. Haws’ comment 1 a-f, and most of the new content is found on page 10.

For the remaining comments, in brief, all the recommendations for improved clarity, added information or references, and format and structure of the text from all three reviewers have been addressed and corrected accordingly. All figures,
panels and the table have been amended. The only two exceptions are 1) that the somewhat unfamiliar sections (as commented by Dr. Kirby) going straight from “Introduction” to “Discussion” is the standard format of debate articles in BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, and 2) that we have not added the panel to highlight research gaps and priorities suggested by Dr. Haws. We believe such an exercise (creating a prioritized list of research questions) should be approached more systematically and through a larger group than our group of authors. Several of the authors are currently actively engaged in the systematic development of such a list of priorities for stillbirth epidemiology and hope to publish this at a later time.

We hope the reviewers and Editors will find our revised manuscript satisfactory.

Sincerely,

J. Frederik Frøen