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: see over
Dear Sir,

Please find our point-by-point responses to the reviewers. The abstract has been revised according to editorial requests.

Sincerely,
J.Frederik Frøen

P 5, first para, parallel verb structure needed: “…and societies COULD gain by reducing a major public health problem.” Done as suggested.
Check spaces before endnotes (e.g., add space before [10] on p. 5, before [30, 31] on p. 8). Done as suggested.
P 5, second para, misspelling: “Millennium Development Goals” (second instance). Done as suggested.
P 7, second para, verb agreement: “making data collection problematic if context and culture ARE not sensitively addressed.” Done as suggested.
P 7, third para, verb agreement: “data NEED to be captured” Done as suggested.
P 7: change “data set” to “dataset” for consistency through paper Done as suggested.
P 7, third para, parallel verb structure needed: sentence beginning “We id entify what data need[s] to be captured, WE suggest a data[ ]set to cover core needs…” – either begin all clauses with “we,” or drop “we” at beginning of third clause. Done as suggested.
P 9, first para, remove space between “30 %” (should be “30%”). Done as suggested.
P 9, first para in “Identification of Stillbirths” section: “Demographic and Health Surveys” should be a proper noun with “demographic” singular (not “demographicS and health surveys”). Done as suggested.
P 10, second para: you say that “In many cultures a new pregnancy is a celebrated event disclosed early in gestation.” Please change “many” to “some” and/or be more specific about which cultures you mean here, to more effectively make the point that pregnancy disclosure in low-resource settings may carry substantial risk to the woman. Even in high-resource settings such as the U.S. (though this has become a decision with minimal social penalty and practice is gradually changing), the custom is not to disclose pregnancy publicly before about 12 weeks, when the greatest risk of miscarriage has passed. Done as suggested.
P 11, second para: it would help to have an example of the settings in which there have been changes from an individual blame culture to a system approach to adverse events (or alternatively, a citation). Done as suggested, ref given to Leape and Berwick 2005.
P 11, insert comma after “lack of sensitivity to privacy and social, religious and cultural needs,” Done as suggested.
P 11, second to last sentence: change “dietary supplementations” to “dietary supplements” (unless this is proper UK English – it is the first I have seen this term) Done as suggested.
P 12, first and fifth lines: hyphenate “liveborn” to “live-born” for consistency earlier in paper. Check usage throughout paper. Done as suggested.
P 12, last line: delete period after respectively (period after reference [49] is sufficient). Done as suggested.
P 13, first line: change “improvements of care” to “improvements in care” Done as suggested.
P. 13, second para, verb agreement: “…the largest proportion of stillbirths are antepartum deaths” Done as suggested.
P. 22, second para: “setting with low-resources”: “low resources” should not be hyphenated. Done as suggested.
P. 23, first para: “user friendliness” should be hyphenated (“user-friendliness”) Done as suggested.
P. 23, first line of Summary: capitalize “Demographic and Health Surveys” Done as suggested.

p 6: near midpage, MeSH is spelled Mesh in one instance only. Done as suggested.
p 7: just before section heading, put ICD in brackets as it is an acronym that is used from that point on Done as suggested.
p 7: consider changing the heading presently titled 'Discussion' to 'Issues in Collection of Data on Stillbirths'. Typically, a discussion section appears at the end of a paper, not near its beginning. We do agree that this may seem somewhat unusual, but we have discussed this with the Editors of BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, and they ask us to keep this format.
p 9: near bottom, consider changing 'in charge of' to 'responsible for' Done as suggested.
p 12: first sentence in new section. Use of the word 'vary' implies a mathematical relationship between causes/timing and prevalence of stillbirth across countries. This reviewer wonders if this has been established - and if so, cite a reference, and if not, use more specific wording in this sentence or make into two. This sentence provides the introduction to the section that follows, which actually does provide a number of references to the fact that there is significant variation and “mathematical relationship” between stillbirth prevalence and timing/cause, e.g. proportion of intrapartum deaths falling with stillbirth prevalence. We have therefore left the sentence as is.