Author's response to reviews

Title: Acceptability of intrapartum HIV counselling and testing in Cameroon

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editors,

Ref: Acceptability of intrapartum HIV counselling and testing in Cameroon.

Thanks for giving us the opportunity to resubmit the manuscript. We have addressed the comments of reviewers point-by-point and the next pages present these comments in quotation marks and in bold. Our responses follow the comments.

The comments have helped improved the manuscript, for which we are grateful. We hope this will meet the standards for publication in your journal.

Sincerely,

Eugene Kongnyuy
Reviewer: Anita Shankar

"I appreciate that the authors have attempted to address each of the reviewers comments and the manuscript is much improved. While I don't believe that any major compulsory revisions are required, I would like to suggest a number of moderate essential revisions to the manuscript. Many of these suggestions pertain to the Introduction and Methods, which I feel are quite weak in their current state."

Thanks for the compliment.

"Introduction: In the reporting of data from other studies, it is helpful if the authors include more specifics about these studies – such as percentages, location and year (or other associated information) so that the reader is able to make a better judgment about the evidence presented. For example, what is does a 'reasonable proportion' refer to – 50%, 30%, 20%, please clarify. Another example is 'A recent study reported a high risk of false-positive...'. Where was this study done, when, what was the false positive rate?"

Useful information with respect to percentages, location and year of study has been added (Paragraphs 2 and 3 under Background). Details about the study with false-positive results have also been given (paragraph 3 under Background). Thanks.

"If the authors would like to focus on the HIV/AIDS problem in Africa (or parts of Africa), they may want to distinguish this in the beginning as socio-cultural context is different in Africa compared with Asia, the South Pacific, South America, etc".

Paragraph 4 under Background has been added to focus on the African context. Thanks.

"Also in the introduction – please clarify – 20% of pregnant women don't get antenatal care during pregnancy – of those that do, how many get tested (or is there no data on this?)"

Of all women who attend antenatal care, 92% accept HIV testing. This is added to paragraph 5 under Background. Thanks.

"The Introduction should better set the stage for how this study falls within the existing literature on testing during labor. It may be useful to provide a brief review of other studies that have examined this question, pointing out that little data has come out of Cameroon".

Paragraph 4 under Background provides a brief review of what has been done in Africa with regards to acceptability of intrapartum HIV testing. Few studies have been published in Africa in this area. Thanks.

"Methods
It would be useful to include a few more details about the location of these hospitals, why and how they were chosen, what you would expect regarding the population using these facilities, etc."
These information has been added to paragraph 1 under Methods. Thanks.

"How many women showed up in stage 2 labour?"

No woman with unknown HIV status showed up in the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of labour. This has been added to para 2 under Methods. Thanks.

"Was additional training done for the counselors or other activities to prepare for the study?"

Before the study started counselors were briefed about the study but did not receive any additional training. This has been added to para 2 under Methods. Thanks.

"Do the authors have any data or information on why women would not accept to be tested?"

The reasons for refusal were stated in para 1 under Discussion in previous version of the manuscript. These reasons have been added to the last paragraph under Acceptability of HIV Testing, Results Section. Thanks.

"Discussion
What is the current state of care for individuals with HIV, what drugs are available? In hospitals, how many mother-infant pairs have access to these medicines?"

This information has been given in para 6 under Discussion. Thanks.

"How will HIV testing during labour reduce the rates of PMTCT in this country – what do the authors expect will be the reduction? Compared to other interventions, what is the justification that instituting the opt-out approach will be beneficial policy for the country?"

How HIV testing could reduce the rates of MTCT of HIV has been explained in paragraph 6 under Discussion. The rationale for the opt-out approach is given under Conclusions. Thanks.
Reviewer: Marcel Manzi

"I very carefully read the corrected Acceptability of intrapartum HIV counseling and testing in Cameroon and I am satisfied with the corrections done by the authors".

Thanks for the compliment.

"I would like to tell that this article, on my side is acceptable and should be published. I hope before the publication, the editor or the authors should correct some typos, for instance, under the methods, 2nd paragraph where they say, "so the (there) was no extra cost of recruiting new staff"; or under the discussion, 1st paragraph where they write "..., discrimination and rejection which."

These typos have been corrected and the manuscript reviewed for any similar typos. Thanks.