Author's response to reviews

Title: The impact of different doses of vitamin A supplementation on male and female mortality. A randomised trial from Guinea-Bissau.

Authors:

Dorthe Yakymenko (dortheyakymenko@gmail.com)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor

We are hereby submitting the paper:

**The impact of different doses of vitamin A supplementation on male and female mortality. A randomised trial from Guinea-Bissau.**

During a vitamin A campaign in Guinea-Bissau in 2002 we surprisingly found that girls benefited more from a lower dose of vitamin A than the one recommended by the WHO (1). To confirm this finding we repeated the trial during a similar vitamin A campaign in 2004. We were not able to confirm the finding from 2002; we found no significant difference in mortality after 6 and 12 months of follow-up between the two different doses.

We explored the possible reasons for the divergent results. When the first trial had been conducted, vitamin A supplementation had just been introduced in Guinea-Bissau, and very few children had received vitamin A at a previous occasion. During the second trial more children had received vitamin A previously, either in a campaign or as part of a neonatal vitamin A trial (2). In children, who had not received vitamin A prior to the 2004 campaign, we found the same pattern as in 2002, i.e. a beneficial effect of the lower dose in girls. The results may suggest that the first dose of VAS primes the effect of a second dose of vitamin A and that this effect is sex-differential.

The manuscript is original and has not been published before. All authors have contributed significantly to the study and have read and approved the manuscript, which is not considered for publication elsewhere.

We hope that you will consider this paper for publication.

Best regards,

Dorthe Yakymenko

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