Author's response to reviews

Title: The prevalence and characteristics of suicidality in HIV/AIDS as seen in an African population in Entebbe district, Uganda

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Author's response to reviews: see over
To The Editor
BMC Psychiatry

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Re-submission of a revised copy of the manuscript entitled, “Prevalence and characteristics of suicidality in HIV/AIDS as seen in African population in Entebbe district, Uganda”

We would like to re-submit a revised copy of the above manuscript. We have addressed the reviewers comments as follows:

Reviewer's report 1

1) The authors have not adequately responded to the prior concern of: “Can the authors give any impression of the proportion of PLWHA are served by these clinics or how those served by those clinics may differ from the population of PLWHA in Uganda?"

   Addressed, under results section page 7 we have included the following sentence: “The study population of persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) was derived from the semi-urban and urban areas of Wakiso district who are better endowed socio-economically when compared with the general population of PLWHA in Uganda who are predominately from poor peasant agricultural backgrounds.”

2) The notion of seeking risk factors for risk of suicidality can be somewhat confusing in the text. Further, risk factors might lend the careless reader to assume the authors results derive from prospective study. The authors can avoid this confusion by discussing correlates of risk for suicidality.

   Suggestion taken ‘risk factors’ replaced with ‘correlates’ where possible.

3) Some detail related to the modeling process, as described in Comment 5 in response to Reviewer 2, should be included in the statistical methods though needn’t be of the detail provided in the prior response to review.

   Suggestion adopted.

4) Minor Essential Revisions:

   i) Abstract, Background. Please replace “situation” with “nation.” done

   ii) Abstract, Results: Please add multivariate models as follows: “Factors independently associated with MHS in multivariate models were female gender…” Done
iii) Abstract, Conclusion: Please revise the final sentence to avoid extending beyond the results of the current study. Could consider “These results identify potential targets to mitigate risk through treatment of psychiatric disorders and promoting greater adaptation to living with HIV…” Done
iv) Background, sentence 1, consider using commas instead of parentheses to delineate operational definition of suicidality. Done
v) Background, paragraph 1. Please reference results of cited studies as 12 month prevalence of attempted suicide. Done
vi) Methodology, Study Design. Please reword third sentence to “To be eligible for this study, the individual must have been registered with the study HIV clinics, 18 years or older, fluent in English and not so physically or mentally sick as to be unable to complete the interview.” Done
vii) Methodology, Data collection tools, social factors. Please state “For this study, respondents were asked whether they had… Items were selected for inclusion in this study based on relevance to the HIV social situation in Uganda.” Done
viii) Results, Sociodemographic risk factors. Please reword last sentence to “There were no differences in the prevalence of MHS by HIV clinic attended.” Done
ix) Discussion, paragraph 1. The final two sentences appear more appropriate in the conclusion and can be removed from this paragraph and integrated there. Done
x) Discussion, paragraph 2. Please delete report of data from “ongoing PhD thesis” unless published. Done
xi) Discussion, paragraph 2. Please alternatively state “a similar female predominance has been reported…” Done
xii) Discussion, paragraph 3, final sentence. Please replace “the association” with “an association.” Done

5) Discretionary Revisions:
1) Backgrounds, sentence 2. Please reword. Done
2) Results, Study Population. Please replace “even after being repeatedly contacted by telephone” with “despite telephone reminders” to avoid suggesting study staff may have harassed those not interested in participating, if appropriate. Done
3) Results, Sociodemographic risk factors: Two sentences begin with the word “Majority” followed by a number and should be reworded for language usage. Done
4) When the authors discuss “adjusting for HIV clinic” are they referring to stratified analyses by site? Instead of stating “clinic was not an important confounder” the authors may want to note “an apparent absence of site effects.” Taken care of
5) Discussion, paragraph 5. Please consider using phrase temporality rather than direction of causality, which presumes causal relations. Done
6) Discussion, paragraph 5. Consider replacing “dependent variable may have reduced the relevance of the correlates identified in the study.” Done

Reviewer’s report 2

Minor Essential Revisions

P-value is an important way to assess the significance of a result. I think is more appropriated 5% in alfa level…with 10% of your results are less plausible…A p-value of 10% was used only when selecting items for retaining in the multivariate models at analysis, otherwise a p-value of 0.05 was used as the level for significance when reporting study results.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Eugene Kinyanda MD, PhD

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