Author's response to reviews

Title: Knowledge of chlamydia trachomatis among men and women approached to participate in community-based screening, Scotland, UK.

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

In light of further comments from one peer reviewer, we re-submit the manuscript (MS: 7737691184212846) for your consideration. We are grateful for these detailed comments which were extremely helpful to us in further clarifying methods and discussion points we wished to make. All except one change has been made (we have given our reason in the section below). We have copied the reviewers’ comments below (bold text) and attached our response to each of the issues he raised.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the reviewers again for their helpful comments that we feel have improved the quality of the paper, and ensured attention to detail.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Karen Lorimer (and on behalf of Prof Hart)
Author comments to suggested changes

N.B. So as to easily identify the changes made to manuscript 2, changes or inserted text are in red bold. Changes made to manuscript 1 have been left in and are in purple bold.

Reviewer 1: Emer O’Connell

Thank you for the comments, which we have taken onboard in all but one case: point E.

Major Essential Revisions
A. Re My one major revision which was not addressed by the authors in their cover letter except to provide the information leaflet as an attachment.

We have now provided a sentence to describe the information provided in the leaflet (p6): ‘The leaflet provided information on what chlamydia is, possible symptoms and that the test can be performed on a sample of urine.’

Minor compulsory revisions
1. There is a definite need to detail what information was provided to participants in the information leaflet. What was the basic information provided? Please send a copy of leaflet/attach to this draft article. A brief description of the information provided in the leaflet would be helpful if inserted in the methodology.

We have now provided a sentence to describe the information provided in the leaflet (p6). We appended the leaflet with the previous revised manuscript, but happily re-send with this further revised version.

I could not see where the limitation of this [poster and leaflet] information being provided before completing the questionnaire or doing the interview is flagged in the text (apologies if have missed)- I think it was mentioned in the first version under limitations. I suggest that it should be inserted under limitations and mentioned briefly in discussion.

We have moved the sentence given below to the limitations section on p17 (text in italics is new text):

‘It is possible that the high level of awareness of chlamydia among respondents was due to the information contained within the study literature (leaflets and posters) as well as the nature of the consent procedure. A questionnaire-based study which does not provide such prior information about chlamydia could introduce less bias to findings.’
B. in methods "college" is still not detailed enough- is it tertiary education?

In our manuscript we stated:

‘Young people aged 16-24 years were approached in further education (a large college), health and fitness (local authority-run facilities rather than private gyms), and workplace settings (two call centres - office environments that provide telephone-based consumer services) and invited to take part in a chlamydia screening study.’

In our further revised manuscript we have changed this to:

‘Young people aged 16-24 years were approached in a large further education college [in the UK these institutions are a level above compulsory education but below university-level (higher education)]...’

C. call centre- more information is needed here as to what type of call centre what is the likely level of education? Is it specialised with a high level of tertiary education? These were better informed on some questions- if this is likely to be related to their education level, please detail in discussion

We have changed the sentence on p5 to: ‘(two call centres - office environments that provided non-specialist telephone-based consumer services for energy companies)’.

We included a sentence under limitations which states we did not collect education data and comments on the lack of variability of knowledge of symptoms across recruitment settings (p17).

D. In introduction "no national programme"- do the authors mean "no national screening programme"- if yes please alter

Ah yes, we have now inserted the word ‘screening’ to this sentence (p5).

E. Table 2- says p values refer to significant gender differences but is looking at all 3 settings- are the gender differences present in all settings?

We are not clear what is meant. P-values in table 2 refer to significant differences in knowledge of symptoms by setting (with setting entered into Chi-square analyses as one variable), not to gender differences in knowledge of symptoms (which is table 1). There was a significant difference in knowledge of unusual discharge (female symptom) and itch/rash (female symptom) across the study settings. Thus, by setting, knowledge of female and
male symptoms appeared similar which suggests little setting effect on knowledge of symptoms.

We have therefore not made any changes in light of this comment but would be happy to amend if clarification is given in light of this not being satisfactory.

**F. In discussion the Scottish system is described as a "national programme" while in introduction it was stated there is "no national**

We are unsure to which part he refers. We wonder whether the first sentence of the discussion section was perhaps mis-read as we wrote:

‘This Scottish study population is not exposed to chlamydia screening as part of a national screening programme, thus our data are not necessarily generalisable to other populations’

If the reviewer is referring to the last sentence of the same paragraph then we have both added and deleted some text to clarify that we are referring to the screening programme in England and not mistakenly referring to one in Scotland:

Ammended:

Despite this national programme, poor knowledge of the issue is still present [24, 34].

To:

‘Despite the NCSP in England, poor knowledge of the issue is still present [24, 34].’

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Many thanks.