Author's response to reviews

Title: Addressing inequity to achieve the maternal and child health Millennium Development Goals: looking beyond averages

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor in Chief, BMC Public health journal

Subject: SUBMISSION OF A REVISED MANUSCRIPT FOR EVALUATION

I am enclosing herewith a revised manuscript entitled “Addressing inequity to achieve the maternal and child health Millennium Development Goals: looking beyond averages” and a point by point-by-point response to reviewers.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Sincerely,

George .M. Ruhago
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Response to reviewer 1 comments

1. Study location and study period is not properly mentioned in the manuscript.
   - The study location Tanzania is mentioned on page 5

2. Spelling and grammar should be corrected in some places.
   - A review of grammar has been done and necessary changes made on as highlighted by track changes on page 4, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13
Response to Reviewer 2 comments

1. The major question is source of country level data for cause specific mortality analysis by SES quintile. How was that ascertained?

   - As mentioned on first paragraph of page 7, line 5 we used default mortality data for Tanzania available in LiST. We use mortality data by SES quintile from the Tanzania demographic and health survey of 2010, but we did not have access to cause-specific mortality data by SES. However, we used cause-specific intervention coverage by SES quintile, and this input is used in our mortality analysis.

2. The implications for policy do not receive much attention in the paper. What should need to change for this to be targeted?

   - We agree we should have been more concrete on policy recommendation, on we have added a statement on page 11 on policy issues…. “through direct investments in primary health care, with a focus on community health worker in hard to reach areas and in areas with high poverty” We have further added a statement on page 13 in the conclusion addressing wrapping up the key policy addressed in the discussion….. “The use of scientific evidence to inform policy debates is likely to aid key policy decisions such as training and fair allocation of human resource for health, efficient health financing and expanding community based health care to reach all population”

3. A similar exercise has recently been done by UNICEF using the MBB (see Lancet Sept 2012).

   - We have, on page 11 and 12 included a discussion of our results compared with the findings from the recent Lancet studies by Victoria, C.G., et al and Carrera, C., et al “….A recent study by Carrera, C., et al has revealed that, health policies addressing geographical and wealth related inequity in child health intervention are cost effective and reduces health care related financial burdens to poor households”