Author's response to reviews

Title: Systematic Review of Diarrhea Duration and Severity in Children and Adults in Low- and Middle-Income Countries

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Reviewer #1:

- “The authors are not describing in any details how they classified the episodes reported in the reviewed articles as "mild", "moderate" and "severe". It would be interesting to have the exact algorithm used to classify the cases of diarrhoea: Was the classification based on the one reported in the articles, or was the classification based on a set of specific variables? The way the method section is written does not allow to precisely understand this important part of the article.”
  - Classification of cases as mild, moderate and severe was based on a set of algorithms developed using data derived from DHS and from the meta-analyses of duration and severity outcomes reported in the review. We have included a table (Table #1) to better summarize these algorithms.

- “On the same issue, the authors are mentioning that episodes were classified as "mild", "moderate" and "severe" based on stool output or stool frequency. How were the cut-off points for stool volume and stool frequency determined? A 70g/kg/day does not seem to be a high stool output.”
  - Episodes were not classified as mild, moderate and severe based on stool output and frequency. Rather, meta-analyses were conducted for stool output and stool frequency reported by community, outpatient, and inpatient studies. The pooled estimates from community, outpatient, and inpatient studies are assumed to describe the stool output and frequency of episodes classified as mild, moderate and severe, respectively. Table #1 will better explain this.

Reviewer #2:

- “(Discretionary Revision) The explanation about the construction of a 'diarrhoea envelope' moves rapidly even for a statistically literate reviewer. A figure, diagramme or other explanation about how this was constructed (as opposed to the conclusions which are clearly explained) would be useful.”
  - We have included a table (Table #1) to summarize and better clarify the algorithms employed to arrive at the estimates of the total envelope of diarrhea.