Author's response to reviews

Title: Exploring the effectiveness of the output-aid (OBA) program to increase uptake of gender-based violence recovery services in Kenya: A qualitative evaluation

Authors:

Rebecca Njuki (nrebecca@popcouncil.org)
Jerry Okal (jokal@popcouncil.org)
Charlotte Warren (cwarren@popcouncil.org)
Francis Obare (fonyango@popcouncil.org)
Timothy Abuya (tabuya@popcouncil.org)
Lucy Kanya (lkanya@popcouncil.org)
Ben Bellows (bbellows@popcouncil.org)
Chi-Chi Undie (cundie@popcouncil.org)
Ian Askew (iaskew@popcouncil.org)

Version: 4 Date: 25 May 2012

Author's response to reviews: see over
The Editor

BMC Public Health

25th May 2012

Dear Dr Aslak Steinsbekk,

Re. Revision and re-submission of a protocol entitled “Exploring the effectiveness of the output-based aid voucher program to increase uptake of gender-based violence recovery services in Kenya: A qualitative evaluation”

We have made relevant changes of the above named manuscript that is under consideration in the BMC Public Health. Details of the changes are outlined below.

Reviewer: Anna Gorter

Version: 3; Date: 22 April 2012

Reviewer’s report:

The paper is now acceptable. The following observations should be addressed and then the paper can be published.

There are still some errors such as in the phrase: “…voucher management agents (VMA) managers ..” agents should be agent. Please revise all text carefully.

Response: This has been changed and the term ‘voucher management agency’ has now been consistently used throughout the text.

In abstract: change “demonstration sites.. “ to “intervention sites…”, This means that the word ”intervention” should be used everywhere in the paper. NOT the word “demonstration”.

Response: This has been changed accordingly throughout the manuscript.

Page 4, phrase “The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2008-2009) report that Kenyan women of reproductive age have the highest incidence of violence measured by sex and age groups…..”: highest compared to???? In SSA? In the world?

Response: Since there are no comparative figures for other regions, the text has been rephrased to only present the prevalence in Kenya as an example.

Page 4: phrase “…..are on an upward spiral.[12]” did the article prove a real increase of violence or was it an increase in reporting?

Response: The document is just a summary of the proceedings of a conference and does not provide adequate details. The text has therefore been deleted and the reference dropped.

Page 6: phrase: “…..to provide a comprehensive reproductive health service package among the poor, including GBV survivors[33].” Change, as in looks as if only poor GBV survivors have access.

Response: The change has been effected accordingly since the GBVR services voucher is for all survivors regardless of socio-economic status.
Page 6: phrase: …The OBA program is currently being implemented in five demonstration sites across five provinces in Kenya namely..” As said in my first review, change “demonstration sites” to the words “intervention sites” (also on page 7)

Response: Reference to ‘demonstration sites’ has been dropped throughout the manuscript.

Page 6: phrase: ….The GBVR services vouchers are made freely available to women at the facility (there is no community-based distribution and no specific selection criteria for identifying eligible clients, such as a poverty grading method used for family planning and safe motherhood programs. 23”. Explain that each accredited clinic has a stack of vouchers which is used to submit a claim. Take out the “( “ before there.

Response: The explanation has been included (second sentence in the second paragraph) and the ‘(‘ before ‘there’ has been deleted.

As requested in my first review, please improve references. Some are incomplete, while others are repeated, such 24 and 25, as well as 36 and 37.

Also, in some references all authors are written in others only one. Please check all references carefully and improve! An example is the following reference:


Please change to:

Bhatia MR and Gorter AC. Improving access to Reproductive and Child Health services in developing countries: are competitive voucher schemes an option? Journal of International Development; 2007; 19(7): 975-981.

Response: The references are now complete. All authors of a reference have now been included. The repeated references have been deleted so that each reference appears only once. The references have also been formatted to conform to the journal requirements.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Response: The comment does not require a response.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Response: The comment does not require a response.

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Response: The comment does not require a response.
Reviewer: Ruxana Jina

Version: 3; Date: 27 April 2012

Reviewer's report:

This article read much better than the previous version and only minor essential revisions are now required. There are still some minor grammatical corrections that need to be made.

Response: We have read through the manuscript again and corrected the minor grammatical errors. It is our sincere hope that the revised manuscript addresses this concern.

As a broad comment, I would have expected more input and comment from the users, which does not really come through in this article.

Response: We have added two more views from voucher users: one under ‘Awareness and understanding of GBV voucher and services’ (see the first quote in the second paragraph which has been moved from the section on ‘Stigma and access barriers’ because it best fits in this section) and another under ‘Stigma and access barriers’ (see the fourth quote under this section).

ABSTRACT

Page 2, Findings: “The required process for …and the community.”: As this was just a secondary finding, and not directly linked to the topic, you might want to leave out from the abstract.

Response: The bit has been removed from the abstract.

Page 2, Findings: “Low provider knowledge…of GBVR services.”: Would fit better into the topic if you change the end of the sentence as follows: “effective provision and management of GBVR services.”

Response: The change has been effected as suggested.

Page 3, Conclusion: Reading the abstract alone, it does clearly make sense why these conclusions or recommendations were made. Consider revising the sentences so that the link between findings and the conclusion become clearer in the abstract.

Response: The conclusion has been rewritten so that it links to findings of the study.

ARTICLE

Page 5, para 1, line 2: Add “to” to the sentence: “enable the user to purchase the service”

Response: This has been corrected accordingly.

Page 5, para 2, line 2 – 4: Make the following corrections to the sentences: “subsidized price to clients, who purchases a voucher for a specific service. OBA programs provide incentives to clients and healthcare workers and subsidize specific health care packages based on the provision of care with pre-defined quality standards and pre-determined outputs.”

Response: The change has been effected as suggested.

Page 6, prara 1, line 5 – 6: Remove “level facilities” from the sentence: “A total of 10 hospitals were accredited to provide GBVR services.”

Response: This has been changed accordingly.

Page 6, para 2: The bracket in the first sentence needs to be closed.

Response: The opening bracket has instead been deleted and the text is now preceded by a semi-colon.

Page 6, para 2, line 5: Add a comma to the sentence: “….services, including: (i) a medical examination, treatment and management of injuries…”

Response: The comma has been added.
Page 6, para 2, line 7: Did you mean “crises prevention” or “crises management”?

**Response:** It is ‘crises management’. This has been changed accordingly.

Page 6, para 2, line 11: Add “for” to the sentence: “…shelters, and help for survivors in liaising with social services departments….”

**Response:** The change has been effected as suggested.

Page 7, Methods, first sentence: You need to add a colon to the sentence: “The paper draws on qualitative data from 97 in-depth interviews (IDI): 69 with health managers….” In addition, the first sentence can maybe be split into one discussing the IDI and the second the FGD so it is easier to distinguish. The second sentence provides details on information that was obtained through the qualitative work. Was this all obtained from the IDI and the FGD? If not, distinguish between what was collected through the different methods and which participants were asked what.

**Response:** The first sentence has been split into two and the distinction between the different methods has now been made clear.

Page 8, Methods: The first two headings make it seem that these views came out of the qualitative work done with community members. Can the titles be rephrased to reflect whose views are being presented? E.g. Awareness and understanding of GBV vouchers and services by managers and providers.

**Response:** The perspectives of voucher users have now been provided under ‘Awareness and understanding of GBV vouchers and services’—see the second paragraph which has been moved from the section on ‘Stigma and access barriers’ since it best fits in the first section. As such, the sub-heading has not been changed. The second sub-heading on ‘Stigma and access barriers’ also has views from a service provider, a government officer, a voucher manager, a voucher user and a voucher distributor. It has also not been changed because it reflects the views of the major categories of participants in the qualitative interviews.

**Response:** The perspectives of voucher users have now been provided under ‘Awareness and understanding of GBV vouchers and services’—see the second paragraph which has been moved from the section on ‘Stigma and access barriers’ since it best fits in the first section. As such, the sub-heading has not been changed. The second sub-heading on ‘Stigma and access barriers’ also has views from a service provider, a government officer, a voucher manager, a voucher user and a voucher distributor. It has also not been changed because it reflects the views of the major categories of participants in the qualitative interviews.

Page 8, para 1, line 1: Change demonstrate to past tense: “Qualitative findings demonstrated a low of awareness of the GBV voucher and lack of….”

**Response:** This has been changed accordingly.

Page 9, second quotation: Make the following change to the first sentence: “I think it (GBV) is much stigmatized.”

**Response:** The change has been effected as suggested.

Page 10, second quotation, second line: I think the sentence should read as follows: “I, as a voucher distributor based in the community, know that the locals believe I have two…”

**Response:** The change has been effected as suggested.

Page 10: Could you possibly have subheadings for the findings related to “Opportunities and challenges for GBV program functioning”?

**Response:** Given that the “Opportunities and challenges for GBV program functioning” is itself a sub-heading under “Findings”, creating second tier sub-headings under it would be confusing. This could have been possible if the system of numbering headings and sub-headings was being used. The suggested change has therefore not been effected.

Page 11, para 1, line 4: “Add “a” to the sentence “…For instance, health providers at a recently…”

**Response:** The change has been effected as suggested.

Page 11: The first quotation speaks to other problems and not those mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

**Response:** The first sentence in the quote has been deleted since it referred to the problem of lack of knowledge rather than what is mentioned in the preceding paragraph. The remaining two sentences, however, allude to the fact that in spite of being accredited to offer GBVR services (first sentence), the facility lacks laboratory facilities (second sentence), which are essential components of medical examination, treatment and management of GBV-related cases.
Page 13, first quotation: Make the following change to the first sentence: “I believe it (GBV voucher) is not used because it is distributed in the facility.”

Response: The change has been effected as suggested.

Page 13, last two paragraphs: There is some repetition here of findings mentioned earlier.

Response: It is true that the last two paragraphs mentioned concerns about confidentiality and lack of privacy, a fact that has been alluded to in the first paragraph. To address this, the second paragraph has been incorporated in the first since it highlights a different perspective—that of community a health worker—as opposed to that of a voucher distributor that is provided in the first quote. Since the third paragraph and quote were based on the perspective of a voucher distributor, it has been deleted to avoid repetition.

Page 14, first quotation: Make the following change to the first sentence: “…even I as facility manager don’t know for example if they (GBV survivors) did come to my place what am I supposed to do?.”

Response: The change has been effected as suggested.

Page 14, second quotation: I think you meant “survivors” and not “providers” in the following sentence: “…so we should inform them (survivors) that when they seek medical assistance…”

Response: This has been changed accordingly.

Page 15, Discussion, para 1, line 5 – 6: I think you are misrepresenting your data here. I don’t believe that it was ever mentioned that there were “reservations for free GBVR services”. What do you exactly mean by this statement and whose views were these? Furthermore, it was not the community members themselves that expressed a misperception regarding the free services, but this was the views that providers and distributors had of the community.

Response: The statement has been rephrased so that it is clear that apprehension among community members about whether the services are actually free was the opinion of service providers and voucher distributors, not the community members themselves.

Page 15, para 2, line 3: Change “in” to “with the” in the sentence: “…engagement with the GBVR voucher program.”

Response: This has been changed accordingly.

Page 15, para 2, line 7: Add “a” to the sentence: “using a top down approach.”

Response: The change has been effected as suggested.

Page 16, para 2, line 10: Did you mean “collecting the P3 forms” or “completing the P3 forms”?

Response: It is ‘completing’. This has been changed accordingly.

Page 16, para 2, line 14: Add “the” to the sentence: “Further the treatment the survivors get at the first point of contact are critical but overlooked, and survivors are often humiliated.”

Response: The change has been effected as suggested.

Page 16, para 3 – page 17, para 1: Make the following changes to the sentences: “As already noted, community referral and the lack of transport system is a key challenge in the utilization of GBVR services. A poor transport network and a lack of money to pay for transport costs have been associated with delays in reaching a health facility and a low utilization of the GBVR services voucher. It also has implications for the 72-hour ‘window of opportunity’ for forensic examination and medical management of survivors. The distribution point of the GBVR services voucher at the facility also appears to pose a challenge especially for rural residents given that all facilities accredited to offer GBVR services are hospitals mainly located in urban areas. In addition the survivors do not have an adequate choice of facilities from where to seek the services due to the sparse distribution of the accredited providers.”

Response: The change has been effected as suggested.
Page 17, para 2, line 3: Add “and a” to the sentence: “to provide GBVR services, and a lack of supplies and equipment.”.

Response: The change has been effected as suggested.

Page 18, para 1 – 2: Make the following changes to the sentences: “…..For example, the majority of women and community opinion leaders maintained that in the community a previous bad experience with a health provider influences the choice of whether a person will seek facility treatment or not. This is consistent with findings from other studies that show that the poor treatment of clients affects health care service utilization.

There is a need to address the confusion among providers regarding the process required in terms of timing to seek medical management of rape and sexual violence.”

Response: The changes have been effected as suggested.

Page 19, Conclusions, line 8: Make the following changes to the sentence: “…..handling of survivors by health providers and the police. These findings suggest that there is a need to build the…..”

Response: The changes have been effected as suggested.

Page 19, Limitations, line 2: Add “the” to the sentence “….knowledge of GBV and the voucher GBVR services.”

Response: This has been changed accordingly.

Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Yes.

Response: The comment does not require a response.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
Some suggestions are made to improve this section but these are minor.

Response: The comment does not require a response.

Are the data sound?
Yes.

Response: The comment does not require a response.

Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes.

Response: The comment does not require a response.

Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Yes.

Response: The comment does not require a response.

Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
The limitations of the work are not discussed at all.

Response: One limitation of the study had already been pointed out in the section on ‘Limitations of the study’. It was not therefore clear why the referee noted that the limitations of the study are not discussed at all. We have, however, added other limitations which are also attributable to qualitative research in general (last three sentences in the same section).

Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Yes

Response: The comment does not require a response.
Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Yes.

**Response:** The comment does not require a response.

Is the writing acceptable?
Minor corrections are suggested. The article reads much better than the previous version.

**Response:** Most of the suggested corrections have been made, and where this has not been possible, a justification has been provided in the response to the specific comment.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Response:** The comment does not require a response.

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

**Response:** The comment does not require a response.

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Response:** The comment does not require a response.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.

**Response:** The comment does not require a response.
Reviewer: Mzikazi Nduna

Version: 3; Date: 7 May 2012

Reviewer's report:

The paper is now acceptable for publication in BMC

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Response: These comments do not require responses.

Finally the manuscript has been formatted in accordance to the guidelines given on the submission of protocols. We hope that these changes are satisfactory to the request made and we look forward to hearing further from you.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Njuki