Author’s response to reviews

Title: Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Primary Health Care in the State of Ceara, Brazil

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
To the Journal Editorial office BiomMed Central

Dear Editor,

We are resubmitting the manuscript entitled “Sexually transmitted infections associated syndromes assisted in the primary health care in Northeast, Brazil”, Manuscript ID 2116237759680985, after the revisions proposed by the reviewers have been made.

In the text we managed to perform the reformulations using the “control changes” MS word resources in yellow color.

Revisions according to Dr. Igor Toskin’s comments

Major Compulsory Revisions
We rewrote the conclusion in order to meet the aim of the study and its findings.
We provided more information about the VDRL and anti-HIV tests and the criteria used to determine reactive cases. The algorithm used in HIV diagnosis was explained.
The aim of the study has been changed in order to match the object of study. Sexually transmitted infections associated syndromes assisted in the primary health care in Northeast, Brazil

Minor Essential Revisions
The terms STD, STI and STI – associated syndromes were standardized. We chose to use the term STI – associated syndromes. However, we also used STI, whenever it was suitable, in some situations. The term STI – associated syndromes was also included in the title.
It was explained that the syndromic approach is recommended by WHO and that the Ministry of Health of Brazil also recommends tests for hepatitis B and C.

We added one chart describing the total of patients with STI – Associated Syndromes who are annually assisted in the unit.

We explained the approach for seronegative results and immunological window.

We added one more table showing the study population according to socio-demographic variables.

We added a new WHO reference: “Estimation of global incidence of STI”.

The text underwent English review.

The conflict of interests was included.

The manuscript has been revised in order to fit the journal’s style.

**Revisions according to Dr. Monica Alonso Gonzalez’s comments**

The background section has been improved to meet its aims. Reformulations concerning the objectives were made in order to make them clearer. The authors presented the socio-demographic profile of patients with STI – Associated Syndromes assisted in the primary health care.

The manuscript was revised considering the reformulation of the objectives and independent and dependent variables in the new version.

We decided to keep the variable “number of sexual partners”. We only excluded the cases that did not report having partners within three months from the first consultation, i.e., the analysis considered only the ones who reported having one or more sexual partners. We decided to keep this variable because we were aware of the reality for the unit. The health professional had gone through a reception and counseling training program that made it possible to start the syndromic management of STI – Associated Syndromes, which decreased the chance of information bias. These matters were considered in the discussion of the article.

The diagnosis of STI – Associated syndromes met all the criteria established by the Ministry of Health of Brazil. We included vaginal discharge and/or cervicitis in the analysis, although it might not be related to a STI. It is one of the main reasons why people look for care in Brazil and its management can help assess aspects related to women’s vulnerability to STD/HIV, especially to its transmission.
Vaginal discharges were included after vaginal PH assessment and amines test and cervicitis after an evaluation of risks or presence of endocervical mucopus. This was an attempt to increase its positive predictive value.

We revised the analyses and put the percentages in “vertical”.

The discussion and conclusion have been changed in order to effectively present the results that were found.

Maria Alix Leite Araujo