Author's response to reviews

Title: Traumatic episodes experienced during the genocide period in Rwanda influence life circumstances in young men and women 17 years later.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Author's covering letter for initial submission

Title: Traumatic episodes experienced during the genocide period in Rwanda influence life circumstances in young men and women 17 years later.

Authors:

Version: 1 Date: 4 October 2013

Comments: see over
Dear Natalie Pafitis,

We are resubmitting our manuscript after including first page, one additional co-author and competing interests which were erroneously missed in the earlier submission. No further changes were made to the manuscript.

We would be very happy if you would consider the enclosed manuscript for publication in BMC Public Health. The manuscript is titled “Traumatic episodes experienced during the genocide period in Rwanda influence life circumstances in young men and women 17 years later”.

In this manuscript we report the results of a cross sectional study, investigating the prevalence and frequency of traumatic episodes experienced by young Rwandan adults, 20-35 years of age during the genocide period and in the past three years. Possible associations with psychosocial factors were further investigated for long-term effects. No scientific studies have investigated on-going traumatic episodes in Rwanda and it is obvious from our study on past three year prevalence that traumatic episodes, such as being imprisoned, kidnapped, held captive and witnessing physical or sexual violence against a family member by someone outside of the family are still on-going. There are long-term effects observed in this study and have not been reported previously. Both men and women were at excess risk of poorer life circumstances and less educational achievements than the unexposed which demands societal efforts and support because these are young people with many productive years ahead.

Another observation was that women were more exposed to rape, forced sex, and having to witness repeated violence between family members while men were more exposed to mass-killings than women.

There are indications of how such traumatic episodes may influence future life circumstance as those exposed, both men and women, to a higher extent were low educated, had no children although being married and had low personal incomes compared to those not exposed. For both men and women these effects signal psychological distress

These are vital observations that are new and we believe that they are of interest for the readers of BMC Public Health. This particular manuscript is not under consideration for publication anywhere else.

Best Regards

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