Author's response to reviews

Title: A cross sectional study: Latrine coverage and associated factors among rural communities in Bahir Dar Zuria, Ethiopia.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
To Ms Audrey Ann Reyes

We wanted to thank you and the reviewer for your time in reviewing our manuscript and thoughtful suggestions. Please find a point-by-point reply to each of reviewers’ comments. We feel our revised manuscript is improved because the reviewer’s suggestions and hope you find these changes acceptable.

Thanks
Response to comments by Laura Sima

Dear Professor/ Dr. Laura Sima

We wanted to thank you for your time in reviewing our manuscript and the thoughtful suggestions. Please find a point-by-point reply to each of the comments.

Thank you.

MAJOR Compulsory Revisions:

Comment

Include discussion of latrine quality in more general terms (see Montgomery et al, 2009). The standards used to distinguish "Latrine condition" into the two categories 'need maintenance' and 'no need maintained' need to be better explained. A more extensive conversation of the types and standards for latrine design that are being assessed needs to be concluded in the discussion section. Need discussion that relates these findings to the literature about latrine coverage in Africa (a rich field) in more detail.

Response - the latrine condition needs maintenance were further explained in table 2 as ‘Part of latrine which needs maintenance (n=202) “like Super structure, Slab, Roof and Dug

Comment - Data relies on self-reported data but there is no discussion of the limitations of this form of data collection. Limitations should be reported and acknowledged.

Response – The data regarding the availability of latrine and its status was collected by using observational check list. But regarding the income and source of information were based on self reporting. We added a section – describing limitation of the study and such issues were addressed.

Comment-There is no mention of ethics review but this data collection method involved household surveys and monitoring sanitation facilities at the household-level.
Response – It was explained in the previous document at the section entitled at “Ethical considerations” /above the result section /.

Comment - Should justify the use of the arbitrary distances that are used to group the population (e.g. 5,000 birr, 30 minute walking time, 6 meters, 2 year construction time). Were these simply selected because they were significant or is there conceptual rationale???

Response

• 5,000 Birr, - ---------------------------------was selected after data exploration
• 30 minute walking time, ------------ from practical experiences, 30 minutes of waking time was assumed to be more comfortable for giving health education and advices for the communities at household level
• 6 meters, was considered a minimum distance recommended between the pit (reference 13 and 14)
• 2 year construction time was taken after making literature reviews on which similar done in one of the district of Amhara Region ( Reference 9)

Minor Essential Revisions

Comment - Recommend removing the 2nd paragraph of the study design section or at least rephrasing. It is worded in a confusing way and is unnecessary to the paper.

Response- It was modified and the reference of proportion taken from other study was listed.

Comment - Recommend removing table 3 from the paper -- there is no need to list insignificant odds ratios. The addition of a sentence to report that several variables are insignificant is sufficient.

Response- The table was removed

Comment - Need expanded section that describes the variables that were considered in the study as part of the study design section (how were questions selected, etc)

Response- explained
**Comment**- Recommend removal of the graph in the paper. This data can be incorporated into a table and its inclusion as a graph does not add to the paper.

**Response**- The graph was removed and the variable was added in table 2.

**Comment**- Recommend removal of lines from Table 1 that do not need to be discussed in Table 3 (see above).

**Response**-

**Comment**

TYPOS in table 2 (page 15)

- "iof" rather than "of"
- Construction is capitalized but should not be
- "functional of latrine"???

**Response**-

- "iof" corrected as “of”
- Construction is capitalized but should not be- corrected
- functional of latrine"??/- corrected as ‘functional latrine’ (as stated in operational definition)
Response to comments by Paul Emerson

Dear Professor/ Dr. Paul Emerson

We wanted to thank you for your time in reviewing our manuscript and the thoughtful suggestions. Please find a point-by-point reply to each of the comments.

Thank you.

General comments

Comment . The author should be congratulated on a very well written paper-

Response 1 - We thank for giving such appreciation

Comment - authors have selected a stratified sample design----

Response- Since there were distance difference among kebles (lowest administrative level) from Bahir Dar city on which the District Health office was found. For this study Kebeles were stratified based on their distances in every direction from Bahir Dar city. Then the total number of households in each stratum was known and proportional allocation of the sample was made according to the number of households in each stratum. We hope, we fairly considered all near & distant Kebeles and the sample size were also fairly distributed according to the number of households. By doing this, we hope it will represent the whole district.

Comment - It would be instructive for the authors to compare the coverage found in their survey against the latrine coverage reported by the Woreda administration

Response - latrine coverage in this study was compared with against the coverage reported by the district health office.

Comment - The authors should refer to the paper recently published by Rachel Ross et al. in Tropical Medicine and International Health which looked at actual latrine coverage and reported coverage in a woreda in East Amhara.
Response - We get a chance to access the research paper (the abstract) entitled as “Evaluation of household latrine coverage in Kewot Woreda” published by Rachel Ross et al and used in the discussion.

Comment - The discussion is currently thin and warrants additional flesh.

Response - We considered it and additional information was added.

Specific Comments

ABSTRACT

Comments - The meaning all functional should be explained in the abstract.

Response - Explained.

METHODS

Comment - Under study design replace the word “community” with “district (woreda)”.

Response - Replaced with the word district

Comment - Please insert National in Amhara Regional State.

Response - It was inserted

Comment - Please give a reference for the study used to determine sample size.

Response – we included our references

Comment - Please describe the systematic sampling method used.

Response – the systematic sampling method was described.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Comment - Under item 5 the authors mention “no observable fresh feces through the squat hole”. This does not seem consistent with satisfactory utilization.

Response - The word ‘through squat hole’ -corrected as ‘around the squat hole’
Comment - In items 6, 7 and 9 please remove the phrase “for supportive supervision by health extension program workers”. The health extension workers are based at the 32 health posts the distance from the district health office is immaterial.

Response - We removed the phrase “for supportive supervision by health extension program workers”

RESULTS

Comment - The authors should avoid using words such as “only” and “just”. These words are pejorative and load the reader with bias.

Response - It was done according the comments

Comment - The authors should define what they mean by dwelling and the significance of the location also the latrine being less than 6 m from a dwelling.

Response - The word ‘dwelling’ was replaced by ‘home’. The significance of less than 6 meter was explained against the standard for latrine location.

Comment - The authors should make it clear whether only one option was available to respondents for the question of “who provided advice to build a latrine”. I would assume it would be possible for more than one person to give advice on latrine building.

Response - They were asked the main source of information for building latrine. And the respondents were gave their one responses as the main source spontaneously. This was the reason for getting only one response.

DISCUSSION.

Comment - The findings cannot be generalized, as they are, to the whole Woreda unless they are weighted by the sampling probability. The findings can certainly not be used to make assessments on progress towards the national target. The sample was selected to provide a latrine coverage estimate for one woreda only there are 700 woredas in Ethiopia.

Comment - We agree and corrected the comment given with regarding comparing the figure with the progress national target. However; Generalization of result for the whole Woreda is
possible due to the following reasons. Since there were distance difference among kebels (lowest administrative level) from Bahir Dar city on which the District Health office was found. For this study Kebeles were stratified based on their distances in every direction from Bahir Dar city. Then the total number of households in each stratum was known and proportional allocation of the sample was made according to the number of households in each stratum. We hope, we fairly considered all near & distant Kebles and the sample size were also fairly distributed according to the number of households. By doing this, we hope it will represent the whole district.