Author's response to reviews

Title: HIV preventive behavior and associated factors among mining workers in Sali traditional gold mining site Bench Maji zone, Southwest Ethiopia: A cross sectional study.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Cover letter

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To, BMC reviews

Title: HIV preventive behavior and associated factors among mining workers in Sali traditional gold mining site Bench Maji zone, Southwest Ethiopia: A cross sectional study

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We are pleased to have the second revision of our paper and we have greatly appreciated the reviewers’ comments and suggestions were very helpful overall. In revising the paper, we have carefully considered reviewers’ comments and suggestions on our revised submission. As instructed, we have attempted to succinctly explain to the comments given by the first reviewer (Willemijn Mathilda Vermeer) since no any comment given by the second reviewer. After providing a brief over view of ways in which the paper was revised, we reply to each comment in point-by-point fashion as follows:

**Reviewer 1 comment 1**

-Although I can understand the choice for a combined outcome measure, I still think that this choice needs some explanation and that the statement in line 256-258 can and should be based on your data (and if so, this should be stated in the paper). Are your findings indeed comparable with others studies if you run the analyses on individual components of preventive behaviors?

**Answer**

If the preventive behaviors are combined after careful counting that used important criteria for while naming a behavior is preventive, it is okay to compare to preventive behaviors inherently. Though that may not be as when the preventive behaviors are independently considered. A careful criteria to count them would be worthy for comparing with the distinct behaviors. The criteria for counting are already stated in the paper in line 133-137 under Operational definition of Combined HIV preventive behavior. Additionally, we may sometimes be interested to speak about preventive
behavior in general terms than specifically. Both have advantage and disadvantage. Sometimes people are okay on some specific behavior but miss other important specific behavior, and thus, become not okay in general/combined behavior.

It is indeed comparable with other studies when analyzed on individual components of preventive behavior especially consistence condom use and abstaining from sex have strong association with perceived benefit, perceived severity and self efficacy. Being faithful to one partner also association with some socio demographic variable like income and educational status. From construct of HBM it has association with self efficacy.

**Revier 1 comment 2**
- I am a bit puzzled about your response to my 7the comment (about the choice to dichotomize the predictors). As far as I know, if possible it is always better to include predictors as continuous variables.

**Answer**
As the reviewer said we always prefer continuous variable. However, absence of prediction when continuous variable is used doesn’t mean that a dichotomized variable would not predict. Thus, when we fail prediction by the analysis based on the continuous basis, we go to the next order analysis and check. The investigators/authors were interested to check that after trying continues analysis. Therefore, when we answer we have honestly speak and put in the document where appropriate that we have tried the dichotomized predictors after trying continues ones.