Author’s response to reviews

Title: Gender Variations in Access, Choice to use and Cleaning of Shared Latrines; Experiences from Kampala Slums, Uganda

Authors:

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Response to reviewer’s report

Reviewer: Andrea Rechenburg

Reviewer’s report:

• Major Compulsory Revisions
  none

• Minor Essential Revisions

1. The methods and analysis could be described in a more detailed way, stating the number of interviewees, the actual composition of the focus groups better, explaining the reason for the choice, as well as the sampling for the key informant interviews (landlords, local leaders etc – how recruited, why?) better.

Response:
The methods section has been revisited and described in detail showing the number of FGDs conducted their composition as well as number of participants. Those interviewed and why they were interviewed has been stated. See pages 6-10.

2. Are the samples representative? It is not clear how the research zones have been selected and why. It is obligatory to explain how the community transects have been done and why and how they have been analysed.

Response:
The basis of selecting the study zones has been described in detail as well as how community transects were conducted in addition to how this data were analysed. See page 6-7.

3. The names of the research sites are not included in the paper, but need to be stated. It should also be described why those particular slums have been chosen.

Response:
The names of research sites have been given as well as the criteria underlying this selection –see page 6.

4. The data, presented within tables, do at some points not interact with the text but exist isolated and are sometimes not further explained. Moreover, the tables’ descriptions are confusing and do not explain their content.

Response:
As pointed out, indeed the tables had setbacks. All the tables have been re-written for better reading and comprehension. The text in the main body has also been linked to the relevant table(s).
5. The reviewer highly recommends a revision of the discussion and conclusion of the study. The style of the discussion and conclusion and the writing in these parts are rather descriptive than analytical

Response:
Prior to the revision, the discussion and conclusion sections were ungainly. These two sections have been re-written with clarity in order to tie up the paper. The tone and style is now analytical as advised by the reviewer. See pages 21-24.

6. Some parts of the text are not ordered well. There are sub-headings, but not for all topics addressed, this should be done in a uniform manner.

Response:
The entire manuscript has been made over for coherence and better reading.

7. The part on latrine ownership is interesting, but could be discussed further. Some statements are not comprehensible (men are at less risk to be ashamed), very simplified, too general, very absolute and not differentiated, even judging. This should be prevented.

Response:
The section that tends to judge and oversimplify sanitation for men has been expunged and only facts reported. See page 4

8. Study limitations are not clearly stated. It is not clear to the reviewer whether the slums show comparable socio-economic situations, sanitation situation, water supply etc. It is not clear whether people in those slums practice different health and sanitation behaviour (e.g. due to different religious affiliation, membership to ethnic group, tradition, education). It is unclear, whether the sample and the situation and challenges described are representative.

Response:
Study limitations have been highlighted; see page 24. The study slums show comparable situations across Kampala city and therefore are representative, see page 24.

9. The reference list is very inconsistent and needs to be revised carefully.

Response:
The inconsistencies in the reference list were very clear. The entire reference list has now been revised per the reviewer’s advice.

10 The reviewer strongly recommends a language check by a native English speaker. There are quite some mistakes in writing, wording, structure of sentences, syntax and some sentences are incomplete. The authors are advised to check their manuscript again to prevent unnecessary repetitions.
Response:
The many mistakes in the paper relating to writing, wording, repetitions, structure and syntax among others have all been found and corrected accordingly. The paper is now up to good standard of English.

• Discretionary Revisions

1. The observation checklist is briefly named, but not included in the research article. From the reviewer’s point of view, the inclusion of the checklist would add value to the paper.

Response:
The contents and purpose of the observation checklist have been described. See page 7.

2. The process of ethical clearance should be described in more detail, it is a major part of every health-related research, as well as the informed consent for the participation in the study.

Response:
The whole section on ethical concerns has been revised with more clarity. See page 10

3. Very few quotations are included in the research article, the reviewer recommends to include some more. It is necessary to make sure they really transport a relevant message, therefore the authors might rather rethink if they are placed in the right position within the text.

Response:
More voices have been incorporated in the paper and situated at the most appropriate positions so as to convey the intended message. See pages 12, 13, 16, 18 and 19.

4. The conclusion should draw concluding remarks from the results and discussion. It could address or propose ways forward or an outlook. It may suggest recommendations that result from the study (some of which are already in the text and might be better placed here), e.g. the need for more detailed research, collaboration among different stakeholders, education.

Response:
We have benefitted from the suggestions made and re-wrote the paper conclusion which proposes future actions for sustainable gender sensitive sanitation.

5. From the reviewer’s point of view, the key words could be more general. Instead of simply using the exact words that appear in the title (“Gender Variations, Access, Choice, Cleaning, Shared Latrines, Kampala, Slums”), key words should be more general to address a wider range of readers (for example:
“Gender, WASH, Latrines, Access, Slums, Kampala”).

**Response:**
The proposed key words have been accordingly adopted.

6. Furthermore, the writing is too little scientific and professional. Improvements should include, for instance, the avoidance of using active tense (“we also reviewed relevant literature”). Instead, passive tense (“Relevant literature has been reviewed”) should be used.

**Response:**
None scientific writing has been dropped from the paper and more passive tense has been taken on, both in the abstract and main body of the paper.

7. The authors are advised to rewrite the abstract carefully making sure that the most important parts of the article are included and well represented.

**Response:**
Indeed the abstract has been rewritten all-over again to enable better reading and presentation.
Response to Reviewer’s report

Reviewer: Leanne E Unicomb

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Abstract

1. Methods section; check on how literature review comprised the methods.

Response:
We have showed how the literature review was part of the study methods. See page 2.

Introduction:

2. First paragraph; what about the literature on gender variation in access, use and cleaning among all latrines in low income countries, not just those that are shared? I assume that there is little on this either- reinforcing the lack of literature on gender in WASH issues would be great to highlight, as a call to increase gender consideration in WASH intervention development, monitoring and policy.

Response:
The suggested approach has been adopted and the paucity of data underscored in the revised paper. See page 4.

3. Second paragraph; references 4, 14 and 15; do they show a link between poor sanitation and reproductive health issues. I found reference 4 and this is not the case. For menstrual hygiene management, there is an excellent systematic review by Colin Stumpfer. In the third sentence I would remove the reference to share of labor as this does not follow from the preceding sentences and possibly fits elsewhere The last sentence refers to disposal of human waste but I think it is meant to convey disposal of child excreta.

Response:
The WHO reference 4 then, has been expunged given that that it was placed there in error. As recommended, Stumper’ paper has been found and reviewed in addition to other literature that illuminates menstrual hygiene management. See page 4. The sentence referring to share of labor has been deleted as advised. As correctly pointed out, the sentence was meant to refer to child excreta as opposed to human waste. This has been put right as well.

4. Third paragraph; I think the second sentence is meant to describe distant access to water rather than lack of access.
Response:
As correctly pointed out, the sentence has been revised to imply what was meant to be conveyed; distant access and not lack of access.

5. Final paragraph; I would put the definitions in the methods section.
Response:
The operational definitions have been taken to the methods section as advised. See page 8.

Methods

6. Please include details on how the FGD and KII participants were selected.
Response:
The details on how FGD and KII participants were selected have been included –see page 6-7

7. It is not clear how the literature review was part of the methods, presumably to inform development of interview guideline themes. I would omit this.
Response:
Since data were both primary and secondary, then literature review was an integral part of methods. This synthesis indeed informed the authors about the intricacies of Gender and sanitation.

8. How were the community transects conducted? Some more detail is required here
Response:
The details of community transects have been elaborated. See page 7

9. The information included in the footnotes 1-4 should go into the text. Consider dropping footnotes 5-7
Response:
As suggested, footnotes 1-4 have been incorporated in the main text, while footnotes 5-7 have been dropped.

10. Data management and analysis; There is a reference to 'various categories of subgroups'. Were they only men vs women or other groups? Please clarify.
Response:
The only groups were FGDs and Key informants. This has been clearly stated on page 9
Results

11. First paragraph; the first two sentences seem redundant.

Response:
These sentences have been expunged in line with the recommendation by the reviewer.

12. Figure 1 seems to display quantitative data. I didn't find reference to these data being collected in the methods. Where these the statistics for those who participated in the interviews? More information is needed in the Figure title. Information on the type (pay per use, shared, improved, unimproved) would be useful.

Response:
The paltry quantitate data was collected from those involved in the interviews. Furthermore, data on pay per use, improved and unimproved have been added. See page 11-12.

13. Access to a sanitation facility, first paragraph; where are the verbatim quotes shown? These seem key findings. If this sentence is intended to orientate the reader, consider including this in the methods. There are a couple of quotes in the text- it would be great to see more to support the summary findings described.

Response:
Indeed, more quotes have been included for better understanding and presentation. See pages 12, 13, 14, 16, 18 and 19.

14. Paragraph under the 'photo 3' insertion text: Can you describe how much the pay per use latrines cost?

Response:
The cost of using a sanitation facility has been included. See page 15.

15. Paragraph under the 'table 1' insertion text on page 13 is difficult to understand.

Response:
This paragraph has been re-written and beefed up for clarity. See page 16.

16. Figure II is not referred in the text and I am not clear on the use of this. Consider omitting.

Response:
The earlier non-mention of figure II was an omission. This has been addressed. The current figure shows the progress in improved use of the available sanitation facilities as opposed to improved provision and progress in technology under the sanitation ladder.
Therefore, the sanitation utilisation ladder is a functional analysis of sustainable sanitation. See page 16

17. Page 14, section on choice. I think the first sentence should read 'A key theme in the study was respondent considerations on choice in sanitation facility and how choice differed between men and women.

Response:
This advice has been well received and duly implemented. See page 17

18. Page 15, paragraph above 'Table 2' insert text. It would be useful to have some contextual information on the distances from homes to latrines.

Response:
The average distance to latrines has been given as recommended. See page 14.

Discussion

19. First paragraph; I am not clear on what is being conveyed. I think the authors are suggesting that counting the number, type and condition of latrines as access does not provide the full picture.

Response:
Yes, indeed. This idea has been refined and used in the paper. See page 21-22.

20. Second paragraph; Include menstrual hygiene management as an important requirement of latrines for women, and the privacy required. Moreover, there is literature to support a greater focus on facility cleanliness among women, regardless of how often they use the same facility.

Response:
Menstrual hygiene management was pervasive in the study findings. This has been variously reflected in the paper. See page 17, 22, 23 and 24

21. Page 19, first paragraph; there is considerable discussion of menstrual hygiene management, particularly the type of absorbents typically used. Since this theme was not explored (or at least not described), I would minimize the text, possibly adding it to the earlier paragraph on the decision making on latrine choice (Discussion, second paragraph).

Response:
This reorganisation has been duly and promptly undertaken.

22. Conclusion: Please provide suggestions on how these findings can inform future latrine upgrades or new latrines in these areas.
**Response:**
Various suggestions have been mooted in the conclusion section of this paper.

23. **Table 1; find a more suitable term to 'drunkards'. I am not sure what is meant by 'obscure' facilities- possibly distant or hidden?**

**Response:**
The use of the English language has been improved with drunkards replaces with alcohol use in table 1. Indeed, obscure meant hidden and this change has been effected.

**Minor Essential Revisions**

**Methods**

24. **First paragraph; change 'latrines being full' to 'latrine pits being full'. The authors mention diarrhoea among children and I think the phrase 'high incidence of' is missing.**

**Response:**
The high incidence insertion has been effected, see page 6.

25. **Did the authors explore post-defecation hand washing?**
No. this was a limitation to the study. See page 23

**Results**

26. **Include the content of footnote 9 in the text.**

**Response:**
This has been done. See page 12.

**References**

27. **The formatting seems inconsistent.**

**Response:**
Complied with recommendation, the references have been revisited for consistency.