Author's response to reviews

Title: Industrial Air Pollution in Rural Kenya: Community Awareness, Risk Perception and Associations between Risk Variables

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Dear BMC-PH Editorial Board,

Thank you for your email and the feedback on my manuscript submission to BMC Public Health Ref No. MS: 2974417282975539.

The revised manuscript is herewith submitted incorporating all the suggested changes. For ease of reference here below (in blue font) are my responses to the concerns raised with references to the relevant pages on the manuscript. I have also submitted a copy of the ethics approval for your records. Let me know if you need me to forward a sample of signed consent forms and oral consent statement.

Concern 1: Ethics - Experimental research that is reported in the manuscript must have been performed with the approval of an appropriate ethics committee. Research carried out on humans must be in compliance with the Helsinki Declaration (http://www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm), and any experimental research on animals must follow internationally recognized guidelines. A statement to this effect must appear in the Methods section of the manuscript, including the name of the body which gave approval, with a reference number where appropriate.

Our Response: The following ethics statement has been added in the methods section (page 10):

Ethics Statement
This study was conducted according to the principles expressed in the Declaration of Helsinki. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Kenyatta National Hospital, Nairobi, Kenya, Ref: KNH/UON-ERC/A/249 (Submitted as Appendix 2).

Concern 2: Consent - Informed consent must also be documented. Manuscripts may be rejected if the editorial office considers that the research has not been carried out within an ethical framework, e.g. if the severity of the experimental procedure is not justified by the value of the knowledge gained.

Our Response: The following statement has been added on the Methodology section (page 7):
All participants provided written informed consent before the questionnaires were administered. For the FGDs, group oral informed consent was obtained from participants; an oral statement was read to them and their agreement was indicated by a check mark on the consent form before commencing the discussion. We opted for oral consenting because we believed the topic of discussion involved no more than minimal risk to the FGD participants.

Concern 3: Identifying information – In the interests of maintaining the anonymity of the participants involved in your study, we would appreciate it if you would remove the name of the paper mill and the name of the township. We would also suggest omitting the fact that the
factory is in western Kenya, unless this information is important for understanding the results; you could instead say “a factory in Kenya”.

**Our Response:** The name of the factory, name of town and names of the districts as well as locations have been removed from the manuscript and in the interest of anonymity; “a factory in Kenya” has replaced all reference to “factory in western Kenya”. Similarly the acronym PPM has been replaced with “the factory”. The two districts are referred to as District A and B while the sub-locations are referred to as sub-location 1, 2, ... 5.

Concern 4: Clarification of study setting – Could you please revise your manuscript to clearly indicate whether the paper mill had already closed down at the time your study was conducted? Say

**Our Response:** The factory was closed down at the time of the study and this is now clarified in the manuscript (page 6)

Concern 5: Clarification of methods – In your Methods section, you state: “Questionnaires were scrutinized for dishonesty and disregarded as necessary.” Could you please update this section to include more detail on how dishonesty on the questionnaires was detected and evaluated?

**Our Response:** The following explanation has been included in the methods section (page 9):

The following explanation has been included in the methods section (page 9): Answers to some interview questions helped in cross checking the consistency of responses. For example, in the early part of the interview respondents were asked the compositions of their household members (number of children and adults) and then in subsequent sections, they responded to another question on whether there were children with chronic illnesses in the household. If a respondent who had declared that there were no children in the household latter indicated that there were children with chronic illnesses in the household (as it happened in a few cases), then such inconsistency was deemed to be dishonesty and questionnaire excluded from analysis.

Once again, thank you for your consideration of my research work.

Sincerely,

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