Author's response to reviews

Title: Determinants of neonatal mortality in Nigeria: Evidence from 2008 Demographic and Health Survey.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Editor's Comments

Please note that changes made in the manuscript were highlighted in yellow.

Comment 1: since many of the reviewers comments had to do with inherent limitations of the DHS methodology, the author should add a sentence in the methodology and in the discussion to highlight this fact.

Response: This was added to the Data Source and Methods section

However, it is important to note that gestational age, intrapartum-related complications as well as birth asphyxia that could potentially improve neonatal data were not collected in the 2008 NDHS.

Also, this was added to the Discussion section

However, neonatal jaundice and sepsis as well as gestational age previously found to be significantly associated with neonatal morality in most hospital based studies [43, 44] were not examined in this paper. These variables could potentially offer significance clue in reporting determinants of neonatal mortality in Nigeria.

Comment 2: the 2013 DHS has just been completed and preliminary analysis report can be found at http://www.measuredhs.com/what-we-do/survey/survey-display-438.cfm
Since their data would be 5 years older than the most recent it is important to simply note this in the discussion and also not that as another weakness since expensive surveys like DHS cannot be carried out very often

Response: Added to the Discussion section

The study has found that the NMR for singleton live-born infants between 2003 and 2008 was 36.7 (95% CI: 34.4-39.0). However, preliminary report from the most recent NDHS indicated that the NMR slightly fell by approximately 8% from 40 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2008 to 37 in 2013 [24]. Despite this decline, Nigeria still has a long way to go in achieving the MDG 4 target for the under-5 mortality rate.

This was added to the limitations of the study

The Demographic and Health Surveys are the largest source of national data, it is very expensive, time consuming and in most developing countries like Nigeria, it is usually conducted once in every five years.