Author’s response to reviews

Title: Past successful treatment, regular income and sex predict home storage of drugs in northern Uganda

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

Comment:
Rephrase the title

Response:
The authors agree with the reviewer on rephrasing the title, and the revised title now reads ‘Factors Predicting Home Storage of Medicines in Northern Uganda’

Comment:
I think SEX as a factor should be excluded from the title and from the analysis since the majority of the survey respondents was women. They should keep the remark that healthcare decisions are being made by women which is a worldwide phenomenon.

Response:
We removed SEX from the revised manuscript title. Yes we acknowledge the high prevalence of females in our study (74.2%). However this is not enough reason to exclude it from the analysis since the multivariable model identified gender (female) as one of the significant predictors (OR: 0.63; 95%CI: 0.5-0.9) of home storage of medicines in Northern Uganda.

Comment:
I would like to see more descriptive information about the questionnaire (# of questions, main categories and couple of critical questions included).

Response
We have added descriptive information about the questionnaire used in the study on page 4, paragraph 1, and now reads: “The questionnaires were administered by five trained final year diploma pharmacy students form Allied Health Professional Institute, Uganda, and consisted of key questions that sought to establish; i) demographic information regarding sex, age, number of members in the household, marital status, employment status, occupation, income/month, educational background; ii) type of health problem or disease symptoms experienced in the last three months; iii) any medicines presently kept at home; iv) details of the medicines kept at home including the name, formulation, source, prescriber, reason for the medicine being kept in the household, legibility of label and quantity kept; v) length of time taken to reach the source of
medicines; vi) awareness of regulations regarding use of medicines; vii) and how any remaining medicines are disposed off after initial treatment.

Comment:
Table 1 is kind of confusing by including the column Households with medicine as a column. I would suggest revising.

Response:
This column shows the proportion of respondents who kept medicine(s) at home. The column sub-heading has been revised and now reads ‘Proportion (%) who keep drugs at home’...Page 6 (Table 1)

Comment:
There is a discrepancy on the methods of data collection. In the abstract section it is mentioned that one interviewer did the data collection and then later it is mentioned that last year pharmacy students administered the questionnaires. Please be consistent.

Response:
We would like to state that at each household data was collected by one interviewer however there were in total five final year pharmacy students who did the data collection from different households. The sentence now reads ‘five data collectors administered the questionnaires, respondents were requested to bring out any medicines present in their households’...Page 1, 4

Comment:
Figure 1 does not look clear

Response: We have improved on the clarity of figure 1...Page 8 (Figure 1).
Comment:
There are some grammatical errors e.g nothern Uganda, Northern should always be capitalized.

Response:
This has been corrected in the manuscript: nothern: ‘Northern’
Page 2, paragraph 4, second sentence. Added, ‘and’
Reported amount of money earned by household heads at the end of each month has been included in Table 1: ………………………………………………………………………...

Discretionary revisions

Comment:
I think it would be interesting for the reader to understand how Northern Uganda compares to the rest of Uganda.

Response:
We have now included a description of Northern Uganda in comparison to other regions on page 3, paragraph 2. It now reads “Northern Uganda bore the brunt of more than two decades of armed conflict against the Government of Uganda. Large populations were displaced into internally displaced peoples’ (IDPs) camps. This greatly affected delivery of services in all sectors but specifically in the health sector. Although peace has now returned to the region with the end of insurgence, and the IDP camps disbanded, the region still lags behind other regions of the country in attracting and retaining health professionals. This is mainly due to inadequate health infrastructure including insufficient medical supplies [7]. The practice of storage of medicines in homes in such environments is more likely as an avenue to improve access to medicines and immediate health care among the population. However, the implication of having medicines in the homes has not been fully quantified in most parts of the world especially in developing countries. This study therefore explored factors that predict the storage of medicines in households in Northern Uganda”.

Page 6
Comment:

Since antimicrobials are the most common type of drug found in households, some discussion around the threat of antimicrobial resistance and references on the problem globally and specifically in Uganda would make the discussion section stronger:

Response:

We have now included new text in discussion on Page 12, paragraph 1; and it reads “Presence of medicines in households is a risk factor for encouraging inappropriate drug use such as using the antimicrobial drugs in illnesses when they are not indicated mainly due to the ease of access (Kiying, 1993). This inappropriate use of antimicrobials can potentially cause adverse drug reactions and resistance development (Liu, 2001). Antimicrobial resistance is a worldwide problem with prevalence rates varying between different countries (WHO, 2009). Resistance development to antimicrobial agents can occur even when these drugs are appropriately used however the progress is likely to be more rapid when they are used inappropriately (WHO, 2009). With the high level of antimicrobial self-medication in Northern Uganda (Ocan et al., 2014), the risk of resistance development to the common agents is a reality especially due to the inappropriate use of antibiotics which is common in self-medication”.

New References added:


