Author's response to reviews

Title: Albinism in Africa as a public health issue

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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To the BMC Editors,

We have the pleasure of resubmitting our manuscript entitled "Albinism in Africa" to BMC. After viewing the comments from the peer reviewers’ reports, we have made the following revisions accordingly.

- **WHO Pilot Survey**
  - The specific prevalence data reported from Congo, Mali and Rwanda in the WHO pilot study were removed from the manuscript given their discrepancy with the published epidemiologic data from these regions. The survey-reported values appear anecdotal rather than evidence-based data
  - Included the specific responder (Ministry of Health official, medical doctor, dermatologist, WHO country officer, NGO official, other) of the WHO Pilot Survey from each country that submitted the survey
  - Use of traditional medicines: We added the specific countries that reported use of traditional medicines for the treatment of albinism and their rationale behind the usage, if this data were provided on the WHO Pilot Survey.
  - Although a separate analysis between Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone countries was difficult given the small number of responders to the survey, we did include a list of the countries in each category.

- **Abstract**: One of the reviewers commented that the abstract was absent. The abstract for this manuscript was submitted under the “Abstract” section of the BMJ submission webpage.

- In the discussion section we added a statement to justify the following: “Albinism is a public health issue deserving further attention”. By increasing the awareness and education of albinism within societies through public health initiatives and programmes, we strongly believe that the problems facing people with albinism will begin to decrease in the future.

- In response to one of the reviewer’s comment that the term “albino” is a negative label on an individual, we replaced the term “albino” with “people with albinism”

- Given that only squamous and basal cell carcinomas of the skin tend to affect people with albinism, we removed “malignant melanoma” from the list of medical problems of albinism

- In the discussion section we reiterate that the responses to the survey are not to be seen as quantitative but rather as qualitative statements which include judgements by the responders. Thus the survey can at best serve as a basis for a wider discussion of the issues raised.

We hope these revisions clarify the points addressed by the reviewers and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Esther S. Hong  
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Michael Repacholi, PhD.