Author's response to reviews


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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

Thank you for the important comments from the Editorial Board and from one of the reviewers on our revised manuscript. We attach a new revised manuscript according to them with the changed sections marked in red colour.

Each point of the reviewers comments are answered in red colour below.

With best wishes

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Comments from the Editorial Board

A paragraph is added describing the ethical framework of the study according to the comments with the wanted clarifications.

None of the authors have any competing interests, which is written in the manuscript.

Reviewer's report
Version: 2 Date: 13 June 2008
Reviewer: Rakhi Dandona
Reviewer's report:
Major Compulsory Revisions
The major limitation of this paper is poor methodology restricting the understanding and generalisability of the study findings.
Background
1. Page 4, last paragraph, lines 7 to page 5, line 4 – This can be deleted as it is not relevant to this paper. The section is deleted.
Methods
2. Was the questionnaire self-administered? If yes, please specify the level of
education that would be needed for a woman to participate in this study as there were some women who have never been to school (Table 1). The only criteria was that the women were able to read and write so they could understand the questions and fill in the questionnaire. A few women could obviously read despite not being at school.

3. Please specify that the information on women who refused to participate was not documented. This information is added in the text.

4. Which women were selected for the open interview? Were they from 226 women who answered the questionnaire? Yes, the interviewed 21 women were randomly selected among the 226 women answering the questionnaire. Text is added.

5. Page 6, paragraph 2 – It is stated that the women were asked if they were willing to be tested for HIV. On page 15, paragraph 2, it is stated that the reason for many women unwilling to be tested for HIV is indeed that they have been already tested! It is not clear what to make of this information. Was the questionnaire not designed to capture if the participants were already tested? These data do not add to the paper. The questionnaire was not designed to capture if the participants were already tested for HIV.

6. Page 7, paragraph 3 – This can be deleted. The paragraph is deleted and the corresponding numbers of the references are changed.

Results

7. All Tables and relevant text – 95% confidence intervals are irrelevant here. Appropriate chi-square or t-test should be used and results presented. In our opinion the presentation of 95% confidence intervals is the best way to demonstrate the differences between the groups in our study and makes it also possible to compare with similar studies in other countries in opposite to chi-square and t-test. If the 95% confidence intervals are not overlapping the difference is statistical significant with p<0.05. If you want to, we can add chi-square and t-test, but in our view it does not add important information and there are already a lot of numerical data in the tables.

8. Page 11, paragraph 3 – 60% of women reported using condom always/sometimes with the steady partner. This use of condom is high in a steady relationship. This could be true and then the reasons for this should be explored in the discussion. If not true, this could mean that the women did not understand the question and hence not much can be done with these data. In addition, the utility of these data is questionable if no timeframe was specified for this question. The high proportion of women reporting condom use in steady relation can be due to the fact that the majority of the participants were well educated and are living in a city. This group of women has not as many children as women in the rural villages. Text is added in discussion.

9. Table 2 - A very important finding here is that a high proportion of women responded “do not know” for these questions in addition to incorrect responses. Please discuss this in detail. The high proportion of women answering “do not know” is further illustrating their limited knowledge. Text is added in discussion

Discussion

10. Page 12, last 2 – If a probable reason for “do not know” responses is that women are not used to answer such questions, the utility of the study findings are further undermined. The sentence is deleted.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being
published

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.