Author's response to reviews

Title: Diabetes Mellitus: Indigenous naming, indigenous diagnosis and self-management in an African setting: the example from Cameroon

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Version: 4 Date: 26 December 2008

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr Whitaker

Subject: Point by point answer to editor’s and reviewers’ comments to the paper: “Diabetes Mellitus: Indigenous naming, indigenous diagnosis and self-management in an African setting: the example from Cameroon”

I wish to thank BMC for reviewing our manuscript and providing useful comments for us to review. We have done a revision of the manuscript. A point by point answer has been provided as you will find below. Thank you very much for all.

With best regards.

Awah

Editorial comments

Comment: We appreciate you including the 'Author details' and 'Copyright' sections in the manuscript. However these sections are not required and need to be removed.

Answer: I have removed the sections.

Comments: Competing interests - Please include a 'Competing interests' section between the Conclusions and Authors' contributions. If there are none to declare, please write 'The authors declare that they have no competing interests'.

Answer: I have included the “Competing interest” section as requested and added ‘The authors declare that they have no competing interests' because we do not have any competing interest.

The manuscript has followed the journal style.
Reviewer's report
Title: Diabetes Mellitus: Indigenous naming, indigenous diagnosis and self-management in an African setting: the example from Cameroon
Version: 3 Date: 14 November 2008
Reviewer: Martha M Funnell

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting paper using a qualitative approach to the taxonomy of diabetes by Bafut patients in Africa. The methods were generally appropriate and the influence of taxonomy is an interesting topic.

Major concerns:
Concern: Please clarify why is meant by the statement that the participants were "purposeively and conveniently selected." Given the nature of this study, the selection process is a critical part of evaluating the validity of the results and needs more information.

Answer: In participant observation entailing ethnographic research you depend on a variety of approaches to collect data. Events that lead to meeting people in fieldwork are planned while many more events are chanced. This explains why some participants were purposively selected and others as events permitted so the convenience.

Comment: Were the statements made by during the social drinking portion included? They should not have been.

Answer: No! None of the statements made during the social drinking has been included as quotes.

Comment: In the discussion, the statement is made "Given the importance of indigenous naming and diagnosis in self-management of diabetes found in this study." This link is not made in the study results presented. The link is primarily to self-diagnosis, which influences self-management but is not the same thing. This portion should be deleted from the discussion or included in the manuscript.

Answer: I have explained a link on Paragraph 1 page 18.

Comments: References 20 and 21 are both outdated. There are better definitions of self-mangement - for example, Diabetes Care 31(Suppl. 1): S97-S105, 2008.
Answer: The references 20 and 21 have been swapped for more recent publication by Clement et al 2003.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests

**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Diabetes Mellitus: Indigenous naming, indigenous diagnosis and self-management in an African setting: the example from Cameroon

**Version:** 3  **Date:** 3 November 2008

**Reviewer:** Ghazala Rafique

**Reviewer’s report:**
This paper describes the indigenous naming, indigenous diagnosis and self-management in the context of an African setting in Cameroon. The authors’ objective was to relate the indigenous naming, indigenous diagnosis and self-management in developing a socially oriented theoretical model for its care. The idea is quite interesting and important in the cultural context. The paper is well written with adequately described, scientifically sound methodology.

**Comment:** However, there is not enough information on sample selection – what was the selection criteria; how were the study subjects recruited?

Answer: I have included a section on the sampling procedures.

In the result section the indigenous naming and the evolution of taxonomy for diabetes and self-diagnosis have been described adequately and help in understanding patients’ perception of the illness in the traditional context.

**Comment:** However, relating the indigenous naming and diagnosis to the processes of self management is not coming out explicitly in this study. It is not clear how self diagnosis or diagnosis by divination is linked to the illness management and practices; how the revelation of the diviner linking the influence of the ancestors or witchcraft to the appearance of diabetes affected the experience of the illness and its management; whether it led to a change in the knowledge, skills or lifestyle for managing the illness and controlling blood sugar levels.
Answer: I have further discussed the results of the study to explain the relationship between naming and diagnosis to self-management and the impact of divination.

Comment: In the discussion again the indigenous naming and diagnosis and the resultant patients understanding of the illness and its effect on self-management needs further reflection.

Answer: I have done a further reflection and provided more insights into patient’s understanding of illness and its effect on self-management.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests: I declare that I have no competing interests.