Author's response to reviews

Title: Utilization of the Atraumatic Restorative Treatment approach in a group of public oral health operators in South Africa: a 5-year longitudinal study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to reviewers’ suggestions

We like to thank the reviewer once more for spending her time reading our work and reporting on areas that require improvement!

A. Reviewer’s report: Kilpatrick N

Following the reviewers suggestions we have added at the beginning of the RESULTS section following:

Of the initial 21 dental operators, 8 operators did not use ART after training [17]. Two further operators had left the services during the period from 2002 to 2006. The remaining 11 operators adopted ART into their daily dental practice and were followed longitudinally.

We made a note at the DISCUSSION section on page 10:

Only 11 from the originally 21 operators adopted ART into their daily dental practice. The reasons may be related to barriers of ART adoption, which were investigated and reported elsewhere: lack of a sustained supply of materials for placing ART restorations; lack of adequate operator time, due to high patient load / workload, lack of patient cooperation due to dental anxiety; lack of leadership and guidance by healthcare management, negative attitudes of patients towards receiving restorative care; insufficient chair-side assistance and negative operator attitude towards using ART [20].

And changed at page 11:

Reasons for this situation may be related to the barriers of ART adoption in South African public oral health services [20].

We changed the entire BACKGROUND section of the abstract to:

A significant increase in the proportion of restorations to the number of tooth extractions was reported after the introduction of ART in an academic mobile dental service in South Africa. The changes were ascribed to its less threatening procedure. Based on these findings, ART was subsequently introduced into the public oral health service of Ekurhuleni district in the South African province of Gauteng. This article reports on the 5-year restorative treatment pattern of operators in the Ekurhuleni district, who adopted the ART approach into their daily dental practice.

We further changed all other grammatical points (i) – (iv) as suggested by the reviewer.
Response to editors’ request

We checked the entire manuscript again and corrected inconsistencies in the REFERENCE section as well as in the entire text. We hope to have addressed all inconsistencies but will very much welcome your advice should we missed any.

We have provided additional background information to the Abstract (please see above).