Author's response to reviews

Title: Age at Menarche in relation to Nutritional Status and Critical Life Events among girls in Urban and Rural Secondary Schools in Post Conflict Northern Uganda

Authors:

Beatrice Odongkara Mpora (beachristo2003@yahoo.com)
Tereza W Piloya (tpiloa@yahoo.com)
Silvia Awor (aworsyl@gmail.com)
Thomas Ngwiri (tngwiri@gerties.org)
Paul Laigong (dralaigongp@yahoo.com)
Edison A Mworozi (anwaire@yahoo.com)
Ze’ev Hochberg (z_hochberg@rambam.health.gov.il)

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Author's response to reviews:

28th August, 2013.
Dear Editorial Team,

Re: Cover Letter for Manuscript on age at menarche

Thank you once again for giving us the opportunity to publish this article on menarche age and critical life events in your journal.

Below is the detail of concerned raised and how it has been addressed.

Abstract

1. Rephrasing done, “stressful critical life events” added in the last sentence of the abstract. The stressful life events included life in camps, abduction, etc.

2. The findings on the relationship between the various stressful events/measures and age at menarche already in Table 1 added to the results section.

Introduction

1. A sentence explaining whether the hardships experienced in the Gulu District were different for those in rural versus urban areas during the conflict period was inserted. Lines 81-83.

Methods

1. Description of measures of stressful life events in greater detail was done (Lines 110-119) and reasons given Added (Lines 119-122). Coding of the
responses was added (Lines 122-124). These measures asked whether the events were experienced or not but not its duration as this was difficult to ascertain as many of the abducted kids were too young to quantify the duration, details of these and more in (Lines 125-129).

2. The measure of stressful life events analyzed in relationship to age at menarche using the t-test for independent variables comparing critical life events to age at menarche (2 independent groups urban vs rural) was carried out (Lines 130-133).

3. The same in two was added for nutritional of rural versus urban girls (Lines 139-140).

Results

1. Information on the characteristics of the study participants should be reported in the text, and Table 1 should be updated to include percentages, as well as n's. Updates done with texts included in the manuscript (Table 1a for characteristics & Lines 121-129).

2. Descriptive findings on stressful life events were included in the text. The most commonly reported were living in camps, homes located in rural areas, living in single parent home. Almost all the abducted girls were in rural homes with majority going to rural schools and only four in rural schools.

3. The descriptive results were separated from bivariate results in Table 1 and created a separate created Table 1a for demographics.

4. The statistically significant factors with test statistics were included in text together with p value.

Discussion

1. Statement on Bias included (Lines 187-188).

2. Repeated texts corrected. Deleted lines 240-246. Moved lines 247-258 to lines 199-211.

3. Section on study limitations included. Lines 259-264.

4. Results put in context of Uganda and added texts on national statistics (Lines 259-261).

5. Findings discussed in context of other studies elsewhere (See discussion section).


Conclusion

1. Conflicting statements corrected and sentence included Lines 270-271.
2. The last sentence last sentence included under recommendations basis of the conclusion.

We therefore request you to publish this article in your journal to provide the baseline standard for age at menarche for Uganda and the population in post conflict situations as a whole.

Thanking you in advance

Dr Odongkara Beatrice Mpora
Principle Investigator