Author's response to reviews

Title: Influences on visit retention in clinical trials: Insights from qualitative research during the VOICE trial in Johannesburg, South Africa

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Dear Editors,

RE: MS: 4185326421275696 - Influences on visit retention in clinical trials: Insights from qualitative research during the VOICE trial in Johannesburg, South Africa

Thank you for your comments. We have made the following modifications in the paper to address these:

1. Page 7, 15-18: We have added the following explanation of how the data was analyzed: ‘Demographic and visit attendance data were tabulated using SAS (version 9.3, Cary, NC). Comparison between the VOICE and VOICE-C samples at the Wits RHI site used baseline demographic data collected at the VOICE enrolment visit’

2. Page 8, 19-21: we have edited this sentence, which previously read as follows: There were no significant differences in demographic characteristics between participants included in VOICE-C and those in the main trial cohort (n=252). [15].

To read: There were no significant differences in demographic characteristics between participants included in VOICE-C and those not included in the VOICE-C cohort (n=252). [15].
The names of the statistical tests and associated p-values have been added for the proportion of participants who missed a visit as well as for the mean number of missed visits. The number of participants in the comparison group (non-VOICE-C participants at the Johannesburg site) has been added to the Participant Characteristics section.

This now reads as follows: VOICE participants had a mean of 10.4 follow-up visits (range: 0-21). 44% of VOICE-C participants missed at least one visit whereas 62% of non-VOICE-C participants missed at least one visit (ChiSquare test, p = 0.002). The mean number of visits missed was lower in the VOICE-C participants, compared to those not included in VOICE-C (1.55 vs. 3.79, Wilcoxon Test, p = 0.0003), and more VOICE-C participants were retained at the PUEV visit compared to their non-VOICE-C counterparts (97% vs. 87%; ChiSquare test, p=0.003).

Best regards

Jonathan Stadler