Author's response to reviews

Title: Sexual behaviour, contraceptive knowledge and use among female undergraduates' students of Muhimbili and Dar es Salaam Universities, Tanzania: a cross-sectional study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to Reviewer's report
Title: Sexual behaviour, Contraceptive Knowledge and Use among Female University Students in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: a cross-sectional study

Reviewer: Peter Gichangi

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Dear Editor,

Thank you very much for the invitation to resubmit our manuscript entitled “Sexual behaviour, Contraceptive Knowledge and Use among Female University Students in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: a cross-sectional study” by Magreat et al. We also appreciate for the comments provided the reviewers indeed these have given us an opportunity to further improve our manuscript. We have addressed all the reviewers’ comments, and adopted suggestions proposed. We hope the paper is now in acceptable format to allow further peer-review in BMC Women Health Journal. Please find our responses indicated in a red colour.

Reviewer's comments:
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There are comments on the paper which also needs to be addressed. This has been uploaded.

Compulsory revisions
Justification for the study which should be part of the introduction
Yes we agree with the reviewer’s suggestion. This important part has now been incorporated in the introduction section
Clear description of how the sample was selected and questionnaire distributed and state whether they had the right power
We have now described how sample was selected and procedure for questionnaire distribution as well as power of the study.

Below are minor comments which also need to be addressed
Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
The question as stated is okay. However, it gives the impression that the study will be
generalizable to Tanzanian female students which is not the case.
Yes, we understand the reviewer’s concern. We have now modified the research
question to reflect the focus the female students in the study settings as indicated in the title of
the manuscript.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The study design chosen is appropriate. However, there is no information given on whether
the sample size chosen, they had 80% power and were 95% confident that they could answer
the question they set the answer.
This is important. We are very sorry for not providing this information in the previous version
of our manuscript. The sample size chosen had 76% power because about 10% (28/281)
individuals did not respond to the questionnaire. This makes the response rate of 90%.
Despite the lower power of our study, still we are to some extent 95% confident that the
participants could answer the questions set because the questionnaire was pretested before
being used and was adjusted accordingly.

3. Are the data sound?
The data as presented is okay. However, the authors present almost a very unusual situation
where there was 100% response rate for self-administered questionnaires! Were there any
students who declined to participate and if so, were they different from those who
participated?
We are very sorry for this confusion. We have now described this part in the method section.
In short, the self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 281 students who agreed to
participate in the study. Of these, 253 participants responded to the questionnaire, and 28
(10%) of the students declined. This makes a response rate of 90%. Unfortunately we were not
able to trace individuals who declined to participate, and therefore we did not study their
characteristics.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
The manuscript follows the required standard.
No comments

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
The discussion is okay. It is notable however that the authors seem to interpret differences in
their findings vis-a-vis other studies as discrepancies! There are some data discussed which
was not presented in the results section.
We understand the reviewers concern. We have tried to interpret the difference finding with other studies and discuss public and policy implications of our results. We have also noted on the data which was not presented in the result section (overlooked) and now has been presented

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
The limitation discussed should have been addressed when setting up the study. It is not clear why the authors discuss sample size as a limitation since they should have included the right sample from the beginning

Yes, we agree the reviewers comment with regard to sample size. We planned to have large sample size in to have sufficient power to elucidate the studied factors unfortunately the individual willingness to participate was low. Since the participation was on voluntary basis, we did not control of it.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
The authors do acknowledge the references. It is however not clear why this study was done to begin with since it does not seem to further what other studies had documented before!
We have noted the reviewers concern, despite that previous studies have explored on the topic. But most of these studies have been conducted outside Tanzania; as we have stated in the introduction section, there is scant information about the topic in Tanzania. This topic is important in the study settings since most of the female universities are at their sexual active age which requires knowledge on sexual reproductive health including contraceptive usage to avoid unplanned pregnancy and protect them from sexual transmitted infections including HIV. This study has highlighted the need to conduct large study. However, it is important to understand that different interventions can work in different cultural settings. Therefore, it is difficult to rely on the finding from other countries to design sexual reproductive interventions in our settings.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
The abstract covers the content of the paper. However, the title as noted above is not appropriate and should be revised to state the only universities covered.
We agree with reviewer suggestion and we have revised the title to include only the participating universities. It is now read “Sexual behaviour, contraceptive knowledge and use among female undergraduates’ students of Muhimbili and Dar es Salaam Universities, Tanzania: a cross-sectional study”
9. *Is the writing acceptable?*

There are very many grammatical errors which the authors need to engage a native English speaker to help them improve on grammar.

Yes, we have noted some grammatical and typographical errors in the manuscript. The manuscript now has been revised to accommodate the changes.