Author's response to reviews

Title: Policy Maker and Provider Knowledge and Attitudes regarding the Provision of Emergency Contraceptive Pills within Lao PDR

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Version: 4 Date: 31 May 2010

Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer's report
Title: Policy Maker and Provider Knowledge, Attitudes regarding the Provision of Emergency Contraceptive Pills within Lao PDR
Version: 3 Date: 6 May 2010
Reviewer: Margareta Larsson
Reviewer's report:
The paper has now been improved and most of my points have been addressed. However there are still a few adjustments needed before publication.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. The description of EC methods is still not correct. IUD insertion or hormonal ECP which could be either of a) combined hormonal contraceptives b) levonorgestrel only in one or two doses (1.5 mg) and finally c) Ulipristalacetate 30 mg.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

2. The themes in the results refer only to the objectives and do not guide the reader as to what was found. I suggest amendment of theme titles to

Limited knowledge, confusion and misconceptions of ECP, Ambivalent attitudes and hesitations towards increased access to ECP.

Thank you for your comment.

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:** Policy Maker and Provider Knowledge, Attitudes regarding the Provision of Emergency Contraceptive Pills within Lao PDR

**Version:** 3  **Date:** 4 May 2010  
**Reviewer:** Davida Becker

**Reviewer's report:**

This manuscript is much improved over the last version. However, there are a few areas where additional changes are still needed. In addition, before publication the manuscript should be reviewed for typos and English language usage.

**Minor essential revisions**

**Title**

• The authors should add the word “and” between knowledge and attitudes

**Introduction**

• The sentence “some other forms of contraception…were discussed but not practiced due to acceptability of methods” is unclear. One suggestion is to reword this as follows: “Some other forms of contraception such as vasectomy are discussed by public sector providers, but not commonly used by the population because of low levels of acceptability.”

Thank you for your kind assistance.

• The sentence describing the MOH policy on ECPs which begins “The policy aimed to promote information about emergency contraception and to ensure the availability of the method at specified health facilities” needs to specify which facilities. The current sentence is vague.

The facilities here mean the government health facilities at the central and provincial levels.

• In the following sentence, rather than saying drug approval is a prerequisite for the drug to be officially distributed through “different channels” the authors should specify which specific channels, for example, the public sector.

Yes, through “public sector”

• In this same paragraph, the authors’ state there may by a lack of motivation to get ECP drugs registered. Following this sentence, the authors should clarify what steps need to be taken for ECPs drugs to get registered.

The next step needed to be taken for ECPs drugs to get registered is to identify partners to register the ECP product(s), and conduct advocacy with relevant authority.

• In the sentence where the authors state dedicated ECPs are currently sold at private pharmacies and clinics, the authors should clarify how these methods are being sold. Since no companies are distributing ECPs in Laos it is unclear how they are being sold at all.
Because some dedicated drugs are brought illegally.

- In the sentence “The private clinics play an important role in providing accessible sexual reproductive health services” the authors should reword the sentence to state “The private clinics and pharmacies play an important role in providing accessible sexual reproductive health services.”

Thank you for your comments.

Methods
- The authors should change the sentence in the second paragraph to state “the target groups of this study were policy makers, health providers and staff of public and private clinics.”

Thank you for your comments.

- In the paragraph on data collection eliminate the underlying of the word “the.” Also, reword the second sentence to state “…10 health providers at private clinics”

Thank you for your comments.

Results
- In the section on barriers to use, there is a statement that nearly all policy makers and health providers are aware that there is a political barrier to ECPs. The next statement says that the Ministry does not currently allow use of ECP in Lao PDR and there is no policy regarding its use. These statements are confusing because the introduction indicates that in 2005 a policy was introduced by the Ministry of Health to promote ECPs. Perhaps the authors are trying to state that the policy makers and providers interviewed in this study were not aware of this policy. If so, this should be clarified.

Yes, I would like to say that some policy makers and providers were not aware of this policy.

- In the section on availability, the authors should reframe their first sentence to state: “Overall, most interviewees predicted more positive…”

Thank you for your comment.

Discussion
- In the fifth paragraph of the discussion, the authors state that ECP was included in the National Reproductive Health Policy in 2005, but the introduction says the year this policy was introduced was 2005. Please reconcile these two dates.

Thank you for your comment.

- The authors should add as a limitation that no pharmacists were interviewed in this study.
Thank you. There were some limitations for this study that no pharmacists were interviewed.

Tables
• There is no Table 1, just Table 2. Table 2 should be renumbered.

Thank you for your comment.

Discretionary revisions
• If there are data available on the percent of women who receive family planning care through the public sector versus through private sources such as clinics and pharmacies this could be added to the introduction. It would be important background.

We do not have such as data for the private sector.

• I think the Annex and Table 2 could be cut from the paper. I don’t think they add much.

For me, this is Ok.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
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