Author's response to reviews

Title: Care seeking behaviour and barriers to accessing services for sexually transmitted infections among female sex workers in Laos

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Author’s responses to reviewer’s comments

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to resubmit a revised manuscript for your consideration.

Reviewer:
The paper is significantly improved. There are 2 minor but important issues that need to be addressed:

1. As authors have clarified, only women who reported selling sex were included in the study; so what was the number/proportion of women who reported not selling sex and thus not included? What was a timeframe for this question (ever or current)? It is problematic for interventions if women working in entertainment facilities who did not sell sex were mislabelled as “sex workers”.

Author’s response:
From 76 entertainment places and 456 women were identified during the mapping procedure and according to the screening question all of the women identified sold sex. So we included all of them in the study. This had now been clarified in line 177, page 8.

Reviewer:
2. Though authors stated in the method (paragraph 1, page 7) that the questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions. It is confusing about measurement of barriers. While author noted in the responses to comments that barriers to seeking care were collected from women’s responses to open-ended questions, but this is not clear in the manuscript what type of questions (closed, open-ended, or combination of both) were used. If open-ended
questions were used, please describe further how responses were included in statistical analyses (paragraph 2 page 8).

Author’s response:
Open-ended questions were used to obtain responses regarding barriers to services used. The description about type of question has been elaborated in the manuscript in line 155, page 7.

Regarding barriers from open-ended questions, we did not include these responses in the statistical analyses. The multivariate logistic regression analysis was applied to identify associations between care seeking behaviour and respondent’s characteristics as indicated in the manuscript from line 193 to 196, page 8. Therefore, the measurement of responses regarding barriers was mainly based on descriptive manner (using frequency and percentage) from the codes and categories according to responses and its content. We have made clarification from line 191 to 193, page 8.