Author’s response to reviews

Title: The role of AFB microscopy training in improving the performance of laboratory professionals: Analysis of pre and post training evaluation scores

Authors:

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
To: BMC Health Service Research

Subject: Re-submission of original Article

Dear Editors,

We, Pawlos Reji, Getachew Aga, and Gemeda Abebe have re-submitted our Original article titled ‘The role of AFB microscopy training in improving the performance of laboratory professionals: Analysis of pre and post training evaluation scores’ to BMC Health Service Research for possible publication. The responses to the comments by the reviewer are presented in the following pages. We believe that BMC Health Service Research is the right journal to disseminate our findings to researchers and policy makers timely.

Regards,

Gemeda Abebe (MSc), Assistant Professor.

Corresponding author.
Response to comments:
We appreciate the reviewers for their constructive comments which we have used to improve the quality of the paper. We have accommodated the comments line by line. We have re-written some portions of the article.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Comment 1. On Abstract, should be improved for clarity how the study was realized.
Response: We now indicate in the abstract how the study was realized in the background section of the abstract “However, very little data exists as to the effect of in-service training on performance of TB laboratory personnel in Ethiopian situation”.

Comment 2. The Introduction should be reformulated for clarity. There are some repetitive paragraphs.
Response: We now remove the repetitive paragraphs. For instance one of the sentences from the second paragraph is deleted.

Comment 3. On Introduction it is important to explain about External quality assessment (EQA) because EQA refers to a system of objectively checking laboratory results by means of an external agency. It includes comparison of a laboratory’s results at intervals with those of other laboratories. The main object is to establish between-laboratory comparability.
Response: We now indicate in the text that “In order to have an efficient TB microscopy centers, it is imperative to have strong External Quality Assessment (EQA) in which laboratory results are checked by an external agency.”

Comment 4. In the section methods the author needs to give a reference of the methods that were used.
Response: References are now given in the section.

Comment 5. On Methods the author should be clear the table 1. There aren’t subtitles in table1.
Response: The subtitles are now given in table 1.

Comment 6. On Methods the author should be clear about how and who corrects the theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Who is the person? Expertise in AFB microscopy? What professional was involved with correction? How many years of the experience to do this? Did they have a diploma? What is the kind of diploma? Graduation or other?. It should be specified.
Response: It is now indicated in the text that “Both theoretical and practical assessments were corrected by the trainers who were senior medical laboratory professionals with at least Bachelors degree in medical laboratory technology and minimum of 5 years of service. All of them were certified with training of trainers (TOT) in AFB microscopy.”

Comment 7. On Methods there are not subtitles in table 1.
Response: The subtitles are now given in table 1.

Comment 8. On Methods, there isn’t a number of protocol of ethical committee.
Response: The IRB number is now indicated in the text as “(IRB number BEFO/BTFH/1-8/2066)”.

Comment 9. On Results, the date used in study was by 2009, but in table 2 the author related 2011. It should be clarified.
Response: It is now corrected.

Comment 10. On Results there are not subtitles in table 2.
Response: The subtitles are now given in table 2.

Comment 11. On table 2, it is necessary to reformulate and improve this table; there is confusion with title and table 2.
Response: Corrected

Comment 12. On table 3, 4, 5 it is necessary to reformulate and improve these tables, there is confusion with title and table 3, 4, 5.
Response: Corrected

Comment 13. On Results, in my opinion, it is necessary to introduce a figure about the sequence of these data “Data on pre training evaluation have shown that the mean score of the trainees in the theoretical assessment was 61.8% with minimum score of 20%, maximum score of 100%.

Response: We now re-arranged the sequence of the data in the result section and indicate in the text that “Data on pre training evaluation have shown that the mean score of the trainees in the theoretical assessment was 61.75% with minimum score of 20%, maximum score of 100%. Pre training practical assessment has shown that the mean, minimum and maximum scores of trainees were 75.7%, 20%, 100%, respectively. Analysis of post training evaluation has shown that the mean, minimum and maximum scores of trainees in theory were 84.2%, 40%, and 100%, respectively. Data on post training evaluation revealed that the mean, minimum and the maximum,
scores were 89.3%, 50% and 100%, respectively in practical performance. Post training mean score of trainees in theory and practice was significantly increased (P<0.0001).”

**Comment 14.** On Results, on table 3 and on table 4 the authors put the same title (?), I couldn’t understand this, it is necessary to improve the tables.

**Response:** It is now corrected that table 3 is about theoretical mean score on smear reading by different characteristics of trainees and table 4 is about practical mean score on smear reading by different characteristics of trainees.

**Comment 15.** The author needs to add a “Limitations” section

**Response:** The limitation was indicated in the final section of the discussion in the text as “Our study was not without limitations. The main pitfall of our study was the fact that it failed to conduct impact assessment at each health facility where the trainees were based after the training on case detection due to financial constraints.”

**Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)**

**Comment 1.** The style of article in tables, in figures and in titles should be reworded to standardize the article.

**Response:** Corrected

**Comment 2.** There are a lot of titles of tables in one page and the table in the other. This is a style problem.

**Response:** Corrected