Author's response to reviews

Title: Are Health Facility Management Committees in Kenya ready to implement financial management tasks: Findings from a nationally representative survey

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Author's response to reviews: see over
To the Editor, BMC-Health Services Research

**RE: Re-submission of a research article** (manuscript number: 8861066731021489).

Please find attached a revised version of the paper entitled “Are Health Facility Management Committees in Kenya ready to implement financial management tasks: Findings from a nationally representative survey”. This is the fourth version of this paper following a series of very helpful suggestions, and we believe and hope that it now meets the requirements of the editor and reviewers.

For this version, we received comments from one reviewer. A second reviewer had seen previous versions of the paper, in both cases having only discretionary revisions (most of which we have subsequently taken up) and commenting that this is a relevant paper dealing with an important issue and based on relevant empirical data.

We thank Susan Rifkin, the reviewer on this and previous drafts, for her continued careful reading and assistance with this paper. We believe her comments and our responses to them have led to a clearer and tighter paper. Here, we respond to the most recent comments on a point by point basis. All changes referenced are tracked into the revised version of the paper.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

1. I think the justification and focus of the paper is clear. I also think the discussion is well presented and reflects the information collected in the survey. I am concerned however about the presentation of the data.

   a. Firstly I think it important to include the questionnaire that was used for the survey.


   We have now included a reference in the main text to the site where they can be down-loaded, to allow readers to easily access this site should they wish to. We also attach them here, should the editors be keen to include them as additional files for this paper. Note that there are different questionnaires for each of our categories of interviewees, and that data on HFMCs was only part of the information collected during the baseline. Many of the questions in the questionnaires are not relevant to this paper but we agree that having the entire set of tools helps to clarify in what context the data were collected."
b. I also think it important to explain how the data collected by the qualitative data was used.
c. At the bottom of p.10 you state that contextual data was collected from the DHMT. What was this data and how was this used.

Qualitative data were collected through interviews with district managers, designed to give a district perspective to the baseline study, and to collect contextual information. Data collected relevant for this paper concern district managers’ views on HFMC selection and operations, and how these have changed over time, particularly since the government’s change of membership criteria. We present data from these interviews in the main findings section (last paragraph on page 10).

We have therefore made the following changes to clarify this issue:
- Added a sentence to the methods in the abstract (Page 2)
- Changed the order of the methods section to have the qualitative information gathered as supplementary to, rather than part of, the ‘survey’. In the process we have also tidied up some of the wording (Page 2).

d. Tables 2, 3, 4 summarize selective findings from the data that you report in the text. What is the purpose of including these tables as you already have presented the data? Can you explain somewhere why you chose these presentations?
There is more information in these tables than in the text, and we feel the tables allow a quick visual representation of information to the reader, including a check on our highlighting in the text of key differences between municipal and non-municipal facilities, and dispensaries and health centres. The tables provide some context and breakdown to the figures we have selected to present in the text. Although there is necessarily some repetition between the tables and the text, we would like to keep these tables in the paper.

e. The bar charts at the end of the attachments have no titles. Can you please tell us what the data shows and where it is presented in the text?
We are not sure why those titles did not appear in the version you reviewed. We have updated the list of figures. The data in the figures are referenced in the first paragraph of page 16 (discussing the perception of HFMC roles by exit interviewees, in-charges and HFMC members, referencing Figure 1); and in the 2nd paragraph of pg 17 (the benefits of being a HFMC member, referencing Figure 2).

Minor Essential Revisions
1. p. 9 your point about interviews with “ordinary” committee members is lost in the text. Can you state clearly what you mean? I.e. This category of interviewees can be found in Table 1 under Guidelines on the Financial Management for HSSF letter e.
This has been updated in the text (the second paragraph on Page 10).

2. Please spell out in full MOPHS (p.10) as it is the first time it is mentioned in the text.
It is first quoted and spelled out in full on page 9 and so we have not changed this.

3. P. 16 last paragraph you state “Key factors influencing HFMC functioning in other settings (what other settings-can you please reference this?)
We have now added a reference to the McCoy et al paper, and added the words ‘low and middle income countries’ that were being referred to (first sentence of the HFMC motivation…section on page 16).

4. P. 17 first paragraph you mention about statements in domains. It would be good to see the questionnaire as stated in a. above.
See above

5. P.14 your discussion about allowances would probably be better placed in the discussion as it is an explanation of why there were no findings concerning this aspect of benefits.
We agree and have amended as suggested. Thank you. (Second paragraph on page 23)

6. P. 18 last paragraph. Are those statements by only the community member of the HFMC or by all members of the HFMC?
The statements were made by ‘ordinary’ community members of the HFMC who were interviewed. In response to an earlier comment, we have clarified who these ordinary community members are, including that they were both office holders and non-office holders.

7. P. 23 You discuss the issue around allowances on p. 14. Here you say the majority of members expressed dissatisfaction with the level of allowances. Where did you get this data?
These data were compiled from HFMC responses to the following statements included in the HFMC questionnaire:
- I get sufficient allowances for attending HFMC meetings (additional files, question 7.8 on page 4)
- I get sufficient allowances for outreach (additional files, question 7.18 on page 4)

We really hope that we have now met the journal’s requirements for publication, and look forward to further communication from you.

Yours faithfully,

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