Author's response to reviews

Title: Patients' Dissatisfaction with the Public and Private Laboratory Services in conducting HIV related testing in Tanzania

Authors:

Sayoki G Mfinanga (gsmfinanga@yahoo.com)
Amos M Kahwa (akahwa@hotmail.com)
Sokoine Kivuyo (sokoinele@yahoo.co.uk)
Godfather Kimaro (fatherdk2002@yahoo.com)
Beatrice Mutayoba (beatricemutayoba@yahoo.com)
Esther Ngadaya (engadaya@yahoo.com)
Rugola Mtandu (rugorugo@yahoo.com)
Andrew Kilale (kilale@hotmail.com)
Kijakazi Mashoto (mashotok@yahoo.com)
Levina Lema (levlema@yahoo.com)
Charles Makasi (makasic@yahoo.com)
Bernad Ngowi (Bngowi@yahoo.com)
Senkoro Mbazi (mbazisenkoro@yahoo.co.uk)

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Second Reviewer report

Reviewer 1: Wilson Pace

Patients’ Dissatisfaction with the Public and Private Laboratory Services in conducting HIV related testing in Tanzania.

Major revisions

The response rate has been added into the manuscript as advised.

It’s true that, the exact number of expected interview was 288, twelve from each facility. However, in some facilities research assistants interviewed more than 12 patients because some patients insisted that they want to give their perspectives and others came with their spouses for HIV testing at time where the total of 12 patients had already been reached. Research assistants accepted to allow a few more so as to increase social acceptability of the study. This caused the overall increased number of respondents in the study up to 295. Although there was some missing data especially in filling the questions that made the total number of respondents in one variable named “Clear instructions” to reach 224.

In most of variables the sample size varied from 280/295 (94.9%) to 294/295 (99.6%). It is obvious that we were able to interview most of the expected sample size. Because of this, the authors did not see any significant impact of the results caused by the decrease of sample size intended. The information on missing values is now included in methodology and footnote of tables. The number of interviewee ranged from 12 to 14 per location. In Tanzania most of health facilities are owned by government and this is reflected in the sample size. Indeed if the sample for the private was about being equal to public it could directly reflect some kind of bias in selection.

The private sector started to become popular in the past recent years, although it is booming up. Nevertheless, our study was explorative one, and at these stages it is not so direct to hypothesis and focuses your sampling frame or study designs on one factor only, eg private Vs public only. Instead we included various factors and as we said before we explored different grouping variables that were included in our questionnaires to examine systematically possible differences in satisfaction with laboratory services. During global analysis, grouping variables that were explored in comparison analysis included age, level of education, marital status and occupation and facility being public or private owned. After this extensive analysis we came into conclusion that the best way of presenting findings of this study is through comparison of facilities that are public owned versus private owned and still giving overall results as shown in overall columns.
of the tables. Presenting findings of all global analysis would have made this manuscript too long unnecessarily. We think that the reviewer meant stratified/cluster random sampling which applies mostly in clinical or field trials. One need to have a previous knowledge of any factor that is intended to be used for stratification and as we said we wanted to have a wide flexibility of exploring different variables.

In this sample we were able to demonstrate statistical difference for several variables in the analytical frame we used. We therefore think that we had enough power to detect those differences. However, for the variables where the differences did not exist could be attributed to due small sample size/power and therefore we can not confirm absence of relationship. This limitation has been included in the method and discussion as advised by the reviewer. Also the issue requested regarding the statistics and the biases, sample size for the private Laboratory and the dissatisfaction rate have been discussed in the general comments and are added in the manuscript

Authors understand that satisfaction is the big study on its own. This is the first study of its kind in Tanzania so we did not intend to go into specifics without having the baseline information. Having this information, its obvious that interested investigators can now focus on specifics and get the details by conducting block or cluster randomization.

We agree with the reviewer that the issues he pointed out about satisfaction and efficiency are important and we overlooked the issues when we reviewed the paper. We have now included them in the body of our paper. The statement concerned greater efficiency of public laboratories has been now been revised in this version of paper.

Lastly we thanks the reviewer for the contributions in terms of comments brought forward to us for we believe that the revision we made has improved this paper.

Reviewer 2: Ole Norheim

The paragraph of the strength and limitations of the study has been added into the text as advised.