Author's response to reviews

Title: Umbilical cord care in Ethiopia and implications for behavior change: a qualitative study

Authors:

Yared Amare (yaredamare@yahoo.com)

Version: 3
Date: 25 November 2013

Author's response to reviews:

Yared Amare, Ph.D.
P.O.Box – 70196
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia.
E-mail - yaredamare@yahoo.com

November 24, 2013.

To the Editorial Committee of
BMC International Health and Human Rights,

I would like to thank you and the two reviewers for their very useful comments on my manuscript entitled, “Umbilical cord care in Ethiopia and implications for behavior change: a qualitative study”. I have carefully revised the manuscript on the basis of the comments and I am now submitting the revised version. The adjustments that I have made in response to each comment are indicated below.

Responses to comments by Aslak Steinsbekk:

• The results, discussion and conclusion have now been significantly modified to emphasize local rationales for cord care practices and their implications for behavior change messages.
• Possible reasons for limited experience with redness of the cord as a sign of infection have now been included in the discussion.
• Whereas communities currently do not use chlorohexidine, findings on willingness to use it if it is made available, from a separate component of the study, have been included in the discussion section.

Specific comments

• Two main questions in the interview guide have been included in the Abstract/Methods.
• Abstract/Results has been modified to use more qualitative language.
• The first research question has been deleted.
• First use of HEW explained.
• Reference to formative research given.
• Description of TBA and HEW provided.
• Available information on HEW provided in table.
• Total N for each group provided in table.
• Expanded notes described in methods section.
• Typical reaction of those who had not seen sign of infection provided.

Responses to comments by Abdul Wajid

Major compulsory revisions
1. Reference on methods provided.
2. Description of TBAs and HEWs and their qualifications provided.
3. Statement on rationale for determination of sample size may not have been clear. It has now been stated more clearly.
4. Paragraph ending with reference to Table 1 is a discussion of the criteria used to select study participants and not a description of Table 1.
5. Limitations of the study moved below Conclusion.
6. A pretest of the tool was not carried out. Role plays in training workshop were used to finalize the tools, which is now indicated in the 1st paragraph on data collection.

Results
7. More quotes from different regions and respondents have been added. Excessive quoting is avoided to maintain conciseness and readability. Differences by region and respondent category are summarized in statements.

Discussion
8. Discussion has now been restructured and expanded to highlight implications of study findings for behavior change messages aimed at improving cord care.
9. Current version of discussion addresses research questions on local perspectives on cord care and their implications for behavior change strategies.

Conclusion
10. Conclusion now adjusted in line with Item 9 above.
11. Manuscript has been edited for language. Past tense used for reported practices by recently delivered mothers, present tense for general community practices.

References
12. Correct reference to study guides uploaded to BMC site added in accordance with BMC instructions.
Minor essential revisions
1. Methods subtitle replaced by data collection and analysis.
2. Explanation for using parity and SES as secondary sampling criteria provided in methods section: limited number of recently delivered women, covariation of age and parity and relative socio-economic homogeneity of study communities.
3. Assessment of the authenticity of responses is further explained.
4. Trustworthiness of data is further elaborated on.
5. Average time of interviews and contents of interview guide is now specified in relevant sections.

Results
6. Frequency of using razor and whether other instrument is used indicated.
7. Information on the application of substances other than butter was presented.
   Statement on sources of obtaining substances has been removed.
   Second paragraph is mostly on how substances are applied, and includes information on who applies substances as introduction. Reference on who applies substances now included in discussion section.
   References to sources of quotes had been presented in square brackets. Now integrated in sentences.
8. Statement on how familiarity with infection was assessed has been moved to Methods section.

Discretionary revisions
9. Extent to which study findings are representative of and applicable to regions and country is now discussed at the end of the Discussion section. These issues are also addressed in the section on study limitations.

I hope I have addressed the concerns of the commentators. Thank you again for your attention.

Yours sincerely,
Yared Amare, Ph.D.