Author's response to reviews

Title: Utilising demography and sex work characteristics of female sex workers to enhance HIV prevention programmes in India

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editors,

Thank you for suggesting revision of our manuscript. We appreciate the constructive comments by the reviewer, which are addressed as follows in the revised manuscript:

1. Data on condom use by female sex workers (FSWs) from the baseline assessment, and for currently married women in the state of Andhra Pradesh are now mentioned (page 17, para 1, lines 4 and 8-9). It is not possible to add contraceptive prevalence rates as these were not assessed by us for FSWs.

2. Table 1 - It is now specified that the chi-square test is for trend.

3. Table 2 - Figures for Andhra Pradesh women in this Table (columns 3 and 5) are from the National Family Health Survey - 2 (reference 13). On page 9 (para 2), we compare the trends of the number of children between FSWs and women in Andhra Pradesh. Since detailed data for Andhra Pradesh women required for further statistical analysis are not available in reference 13, we have not done statistical analysis for these comparisons.

4. Tables 3 and 4 - Table 3 provides distribution of select characteristics of FSWs for the different durations of sex work whereas Table 4 provides distribution based on the gap between first vaginal intercourse and the first sexual intercourse in exchange for money for FSWs. Both these Tables give different information. For example - Table 3 provides information that 63.1% of street-based FSWs were in sex work for more than 5 years whereas Table 4 provides information that 39.5% of street-based FSWs had no gap between first vaginal intercourse and the first sexual intercourse in exchange for money. In our understanding, the information provided in these Tables in this manner would be useful for HIV prevention programs aimed at FSWs in India.

Figure 3 (there is no Figure 4 in this manuscript) shows the mean age (in years) at first vaginal intercourse and at first sexual intercourse in exchange for money, and the gap (in years) between the two for the three types of FSWs. These data are not shown in Tables 3 and 4.

We thank BMC International Health and Human Rights for considering our manuscript. If any further clarifications were required, we would be happy to respond.

Yours sincerely,

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