Author's response to reviews

Title: Community Health Workers: to train or to restrain? A longitudinal survey to assess the impact of training community health workers in the Bolama Region, Guinea-Bissau

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Main revisions made can be summarized in the following 3 points:

1 – Minor questions suggested by reviewers Miriam Hirschfeld and João Fernando JS Lima Schwalbach were acknowledged and changed. These were mainly related with text, figure titles and grammar corrections.

2 – Major issues reported by reviewers Miriam Hirschfeld and James McCaffery were also acknowledged. Despite comments’ value, these two comments seem to reflect each reviewer perspective on the subject and are, in some way contradictory (one more formal HRH oriented and other pro-CHW). The first one emphasizes the losses in CHW performance highlighting the need to correctly assess the value of CHWs programs and decision making level. The second stresses the conditions who may be affecting CHW performance highlighting the further need to go deeper in studying these factors. The authors believe these 2 views can be complementary and were both briefly included in Conclusions section. The authors opted to remain neutral and equidistant from these two perspectives, referring pros and consequences of investing in CHW or not. This research is aimed to be an informative tool for decision makers in Bissau. As it is the first reported research on the subject and it is not based on robust evidence, we believe it would be better to highlight problems found and factors for success and failure along with identifying possible alternatives for CHW programs rather than pointing one of the perspectives.

3 – The authors thank the document sent by reviewer James McCaffery which had important observations. Some of them were included in Conclusions.