Author's response to reviews

Title: Shaping legal abortion provision in Ghana: using policy theory to inform evidenced-based practice

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Author's response to reviews:

We have refocused this paper, as requested, to highlight the implications of research for improved and evidence-base practice.

We have amended the title and written a completely new discussion and conclusion sections and well as amending the abstract and providing other relevant pointers within the paper.

We now believe the paper highlights the utility of using policy implementation theory to help identify what influences shape the way in which service providers and their managers implement policies. Understanding these allows us to move towards a more evidenced-based practice by highlighting precisely what needs to be changed for different cadres of staff in order that provision of safe-abortion services becomes more widespread.

We have detailed the factors influencing provision of safe-abortion services, which are primarily religious beliefs and the extent to which they are tempered by exposure to clinical practices in other countries, evidence of the public health impact (i.e. research) and understanding of Ghana's international obligations (such as the MDG target of reducing MMR).

We conclude with discussion of a range of possible responses to address the research findings on the different influences that different cadres of staff show.

We trust this re-focus places the paper now sufficiently within the scope of the journal to warrant its sending out for full peer review.

yours faithfully,

Susannah Mayhew and Patience Aniteye.