Author’s response to reviews

Title: Progress towards the achievement of MDG4 in the Commonwealth of Independent States: uncertain data, clear priorities.

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Author’s response to reviews:

To the Editor.

Sir,

We have substantially revised our manuscript based on the comments and suggestions received by the referees. First, we have included the latest available data related to 2008 child mortality levels, and modified the table and comments accordingly, as well as the references. Second, we have included a thorough discussion - within the limits of this type of paper - of the many factors involved in U5MR fluctuations and inconsistencies. We have added a reference (no.16) on how official child mortality data are usually adjusted. Third, we have modified the sequence of paragraphs, which is now more logically consequent, improved the introduction, eliminated the duplications and made an attempt to improve the clarity and reduce the length of paragraphs. We have also better addressed in the discussion the issue of disadvantaged groups and briefly discussed the issues of maternal education as requested by one of the referees (to conclude that it is not a big issue with the exception of Tajikistan). We have also added a few words to strengthen our point - which we think is obvious throughout the paper - that universal access is a must.

We hope that the paper can now be accepted for publication.

Sincerely,

Adriano Cattaneo and Giorgio Tamburlini on behalf of all the authors.