Author's response to reviews

Title: Social autopsy: INDEPTH Network experiences of utility, process, practices and challenges in investigating causes and contributors to mortality

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Version: 5 Date: 22 June 2011

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22nd June 2011

Editors-in-Chief: Christopher JL Murray, Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation; Alan D. Lopez, University of Queensland

Issue Editor: Dr. Rafael Lozano, Professor of Global Health at the University of Washington’s Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

RE: Social autopsy: INDEPTH Network experiences of utility, process, practices and challenges in investigating causes and contributors to mortality

Please find enclosed a third revision of the manuscript entitled "Social autopsy: INDEPTH Network experiences of utility, process, practices and challenges in investigating causes and contributors to mortality" for consideration for publication in the special thematic series on verbal autopsy.

We have revised the manuscript by addressing the editor’s comments using track-changes and bullet by bullet responses.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours,
Handling Editor's comments:

- We feel that in the case of the Ghana site, there are too few cases to provide a general conclusion. We would like you to be cautious with the conclusions and emphasize that this is not a causal conclusion. You should report and describe your results, but please do not make a causal connection, as the sample size is too small.

Authors' response:

We have re-read the discussion and conclusion section and although we cannot really find anything stating a causal conclusion around the Ghana result in the current version we have still tried to tone down the interpretation of the Ghana results.

- Is there any way you can present the data in Figure 1 and 2 differently? It is a bit confusing for the reader to switch between looking at the figures and the tables, and the arrowed pathways in the figures are a bit hard to follow from the description in the text.

Authors' response:

We agree that the figure is a bit confusing and have now opted for using the general pathway model instead of the two country specific models which included the results. Hence we only use the model to guide the data analysis and presentation of the results.