Author’s response to reviews

Title: Office-based screening for domestic violence: use of a child safety questionnaire.

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PDF covering letter
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re: MS ID 1288826554249903 “Office-based screening for domestic violence: use of a child safety questionnaire.”

Matt Hodgkinson
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Dear Mr. Hodgkinson:

I would like to thank you and the three BMC peer referees for the careful attention and thoughtful comments given to our recent submission: “Office-based screening for domestic violence: use of a child safety questionnaire.”

We have extensively revised our manuscript, in response to the suggestions provided.

Major Revisions:

1. The background section has been extensively edited and shortened.
2. The methods section has been re-written.
3. The statistical analysis has been redone in a manner suggested by the reviewers.
4. The discussion section has been extensively edited and shortened.
5. The graph was converted into a table, as suggested.

Response to Referee 1: Robert Siegel

General comments: The introduction now includes a comment comparing our study to previously published studies.

Specific comments:

1. Unfortunately, an analysis of non-Hispanic vs. Hispanic prevalence of domestic violence is not possible due to the manner in which our data was collected.
2. The lack of understanding of the true background prevalence of domestic violence in our community was addressed. There is no “gold standard” available with which to compare results.
3. Explanation of p value in results section clarified.
4. Discussion of pregnancy studies deleted.

Response to Referee 2: Gregory Parkinson

General comments: We have clarified our “pre-screening” period, and no longer use the term passive screening, agreeing that it was too vague. Our discussion has been extensively edited and shortened.

Specific comments:

1. The term “passive screening” is no longer used to define the period before use of the questionnaire was instituted. As we began collecting data for this study for three months before we began use of the questionnaire, we now compare this period to the first three months of active screening.
2. The section on violence during pregnancy has been deleted.
3. The discussion section has been extensively edited and shortened.

Response to Referee 3: Julie A. Jonassen

Discretionary Revisions:

1. The paragraph mentioned on original manuscript page 8 has been extensively edited.
2. “Lessons learned” now in discussion section.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. Confidentiality measures noted in methods section.
2. “Parents” vs. “Mothers” or other caregivers clarified in methods section.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The statistical analysis section was revised, so that results obtained during the three-month pre-screening period are now compared with the results obtained from the first three months of active screening. Full year data are also provided.
2. We have added a discussion of population denominators: the entire clinic patient population vs. those families who completed a study questionnaire.
3. A discussion of multiple children in the same family has been added.
4. A discussion of multiple questionnaires completed by the same mother has been added.
5. As suggested, Figure 1 has been converted into a table.
6. We are unable to determine how many women completed a questionnaire in both years of the study. This has been noted in the discussion.