Author's response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of the Reach and Impact of the 100% Jeune Youth Social Marketing Program in Cameroon: Findings from Three Cross-Sectional Surveys

Authors:

Andrea Plautz (aplautz@psi.org)
Dominique Meekers (dmeekers@tulane.edu)

Version: 2 Date: 12 December 2004

Author's response to reviews: see over
December 10, 2004

Dr. Regina Kulier, Editor
BMC Reproductive Health

Dear Dr. Kulier:

I would like to re-submit the enclosed manuscript entitled “Evaluation of the Reach and Impact of the 100% Jeune Youth Social Marketing Program in Cameroon: Findings from Three Cross-Sectional Surveys.” This revised version takes the reviewers’ comments into account.

A memo replying to the reviewers’ comments is attached. If you have any questions concerning this manuscript, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dominique Meekers, Ph.D.
Professor
dmeekers@tulane.edu
Response to the Reviewers’ Comments

Reply to Dr. Kennedy

- We expanded the abstract, as suggested.
- We clarified that formative research was conducted prior to the design of the campaign and that all messages and materials were pre-tested.
- As requested, we elaborated the discussion of PSI’s theoretical framework.
- The reviewer commented that several of the studies cited in the section about the theoretical framework were not conducted with samples of African youth. This is incorrect. All recent studies cited (e.g., Estrin etc.) refer to studies of African youth. We rephrased the text to clarify this.
- Per the reviewer’s suggestion, we added our justification for the exposure measure.
- The reviewer noted that there was a minor discrepancy in the section on measures of perceived condom attributes and access. We corrected this discrepancy.
- We moved the description of the questions about program exposure to the Measures section, as suggested.
- We eliminated the appendix but retained the description of those results in the text, as suggested.
- The reviewer questioned whether it is realistic that 12% of youth had attended a peer education session. This appears quite realistic considering that peer educators conducted sessions at schools, soccer matches and other youth hangouts, where they can reach many youth at once. Peer educator teams conducted 50-80 sessions per month.
- The reviewer asked for clarification about the control for “number of sexual partners” in tables 3 and 4. In the original manuscript, the text and footnotes to the tables suggested – in error - that number of sexual partners was controlled for in analyses of outcome measures of sexual activity. We have corrected this error both in the text and in the footnote to the tables.
- The reviewer also suggested that controlling for number of sexual partners may be problematic when the outcome is ‘condom use with casual partners’ or ‘self-efficacy with casual partners.’ We disagree with this, as those people whose last partner was a casual one may differ in terms of the number of sexual partners they had had. Since sexual history is likely to influence both condom use and self-efficacy, it is important to control for this.
- The reviewer requested clarification about the analyses procedures. As indicated in the titles of Tables 3 and 4, all analyses are conducted using logistic regression. The only part that is somewhat uncommon is that we converted the results of the logistic regressions to adjusted proportions. We believe this to be important, as this facilitates interpretation for program managers, many of whom do not have a strong statistical background. However, in response to the reviewer’s comments, we clarified the description of the adjusted proportions, and added references to the relevant literature for those readers who are interested in more detailed information about the calculation procedures.
• The reviewer wondered if there was sufficient statistical power to detect an effect on unwanted pregnancies. Although we are not conducting a comparison of proportions here (our trend results are based on the logistic regression coefficient for survey year), the reviewer is correct these results were based on the small number of young women who had ever been pregnant. Hence, we have removed this outcome measure from the analyses.

• The reviewer suggested lumping males and females in the analysis to reduce the number of tables. However, as the reviewer remarks, this information is important for planning purposes and otherwise not available. Hence, we have retained separate analyses for males and females.

• The reviewer expressed concern that the analyses in Table 4 and the associated text were not clear. This contrasts with the opinion of reviewer Slaymaker, who said “the results were interesting and clear.” Nevertheless, we have rewritten the first paragraph pertaining to Table 4 to clarify the analysis.

• The reviewer also suggested replacing our analysis with separate dose-response analyses for the 2002 and 2003 surveys. Doing so would imply that there would be no formal test of differences across survey years. Consequently, there would be no way to test if there were any secular trends unrelated to the program. We believe that our ability to test for such secular trends is one of the strengths of this study. No change was made.

Reply to Dr. Slaymaker

• We specified the measure of condom use that is discussed in paragraph 1 of the introduction.

• We added reference to the literature that explains the calculation of the adjusted proportions.

• The reviewer suggested addressing how 100% Jeune compares with other programs. This information was shown Appendix 1, but per suggestion of the other reviewer this appendix was deleted. The results, however, are still described in the text (first paragraph of the results section). In this section, we have noted that the 100% Jeune program appears to reach mostly youth who are also being reached by other programs, rather than youth who had not previously been served.

• We reference the paper by Chapman and Robinson.

• We added the distribution of the sample by number of sexual partners to Table 1.

• The reviewer also suggested to try and identify new condom users. Unfortunately, our data set does not have a good measure for this. No change was made.