Author's response to reviews

Title: A protocol for a systematic review of birth preparedness and complication readiness programmes

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor

I herewith submit the revised manuscript entitled:

“A protocol for a systematic review of birth preparedness and complication readiness programmes.”

Herewith we give a point-by-point explanation of concerns addressed by the reviewers:

- Regarding the use of abbreviations: since birth preparedness and complication readiness is used in the JHPIEGO manual that we are using for this review we prefer to use the abbreviation they use as well. We have, however, limited the abbreviations to a minimum and changed some of the used abbreviations accordingly.
- Regarding the research questions: this has been changed according to suggestions by reviewer
- Regarding the use of PICOTS: we added ‘timeframe’ and ‘setting’ to the study inclusion criteria section
- Regarding the study design and comparison: we have described the interventions and control groups in more detail
- Regarding the reference to PubMed’s two sets: we removed these elements since a complete PubMed search always contains search strategy that will result in a search in MEDLINE and in recent added literature. To avoid confusion we deleted this from the manuscript.
- Regarding the database selection and the search for grey literature: We have chosen these three databases for their scientific relevance. We planned to perform a search in Popline specifically to include extra literature from low resource settings. However, Popline searches are also included in Medline and will automatically appear in the PubMed search. No additional articles will be found with a separate search. To clarify how we will make sure to include articles from low resource countries we have elaborated on our search in grey literature with specific examples.
- The preliminary PubMed strategy has been added as additional file 1.
- Regarding the inclusion screening process: we clarified the screening process with that three reviewers will independently screen the abstracts in duplicate. Also the 1st screening phase will be done with use of the BP/CR matrix. Only when full articles are retrieved we will match them to the inclusion criteria.

- Regarding the quality and risk of bias: we will use two separate tools to evaluate risk of bias. This is clarified in the paragraph. Version of Cochrane Handbook has been added.

- Regarding the variables that will be extracted: we elaborated on the variables extracted

- The PROSPERO number has been added to the protocol

- Regarding the funding source: YR received funding for her entire PhD trajectory but not specifically for this study. Therefore we removed this part from the competing interest section as agreed with senior editor assistant Rebecca Simmons (email 31st of October)

- The summary section has been removed as requested by the editor

- An acknowledgment paragraph has been added as requested by the editor

We would like to thank the reviewer and editor for their valuable suggestions. We have made changes accordingly.

Please address all correspondence concerning this manuscript to me at my email address as stated above.

Yours sincerely, on behalf of the co-authors

A. Solnes Miltenburg