Author’s response to reviews

Title: Traffic Police Officers' Experience of Post-crash Care to Road Traffic Injury Victims: A Qualitative Study in Tanzania

Authors:

Gift Lukumay (giftgadiel@yahoo.com)
Dickson Mkoka (mkokamalinga@yahoo.co.uk)
Anne Outwater (anneoutwater@yahoo.com)
Menti Ndile (mentlast@yahoo.co.uk)
Britt-Inger Saveman (britt-inger.saveman@umu.se)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Please include a cover letter with a point-by-point response to the comments, describing any additional experiments that were carried out and including a detailed rebuttal of any criticisms or requested revisions that you disagreed with. Please also ensure that all changes to the manuscript are indicated in the text by highlighting or using track changes.

Thank you for the guidance; All the revision and rebuttal concerning reviewers’ comments are attached here. In addition, a cover letter with point by point response to the comments is included.

All responses are as detailed below.

Although the objective/aim stated at Pages 4-5 is reasonably pertinent to the methods and procedures used by the authors, it is worth remarking that it should be also clearly and explicitly presented in the abstract.

Thank you for your comment, we have included the aim of the study in the abstract as you suggested. Find the changes in page 2

Therefore, the study aimed to explore the experiences of traffic police officers concerning the provision of care to RTI victims in the prehospital environment, including the role of traffic police upon arriving at the crash scene, the challenges they face, and their opinions about how to improve care to RTI victims.

Also, for this section, a bit more of information (basic demographics) of the sample should be needed, to better-describe the participants of the study. Instead, authors have included
information that is redundant for the abstract ("three phases from December 2017 to June 2018"). Please check and amend!

We agree on that comment; we have removed the redundant statement in the abstract “three phases from December 2017 to June 2018” and demographic characteristics of participant has been added.

Please look at page 2

There were 41 participants, 27 of them were male and 14 were female. About half (48.7%) of the study participants were aged between 30 to 39 years.

Keywords need attention, in order to acquire more accuracy - please revise!

We appreciate the comment, key words have been revised for more accuracy

Please find changes in page 2 post-crash care experience, qualitative method, road traffic injury, traffic police

Also, and same as in the abstract, more information on the "profile" of your informants is needed; for example, gender and age distribution may explain certain trends in the existing perceptions/experiences and, then, in the responses provided

Thank you for the comment; more detailed profile of participants has been included as suggested.

Please see highlighted text in page 9

There were 41 traffic police officer, working from three districts in Dar es Salaam region who were interviewed for this study. The mean age of the participants was 37 years. Participants differed in terms of sex/gender where by 27 where men and 14 women. The working experience as a traffic police officer ranging from 3 year to 32 years, while about half (48.7%) of them aged between 30-39 years old.

This issue should also be discussed as a potential limitation of the study.

We appreciate the comment; This was a small study of traffic police officers in one region, with number of males almost twice that of female but with no differences in the responses. We do not claim to represent the overall distribution of age group view in this paper or to determine the relative frequencies of specific views, age or gender wise. We do believe that the qualitative method is well matched to the goal of characterizing a range of police traffic officers post-crash care experiences.
The title is a bit too long, and the geographical coverage should not be that specific. Considering that the authors did a good job supporting the methods/tools and human information sources chosen for this paper, a more appropriate title could be "Traffic Police Officers’ Experience of Post-crash Care to Road Traffic Injury Victims: A Qualitative Study in Tanzania", if we bear in mind the validity given by the discussion and assume that employed methods are accurate.

Thank you for suggestion; the title has been amended to read "Traffic Police Officers’ Experience of Post-crash Care to Road Traffic Injury Victims: A Qualitative Study in Tanzania" as suggested.

Please find the changes in page 1

Traffic Police Officers’ Experiences of Post-crash Care to Road Traffic Injury Victims: A Qualitative Study in Tanzania

Although the aim of qualitative studies is not to acquire a major generalizability (due to its specificity and reduced coverage), improving the presentation of results according to sex/age/tenure could be useful to identify some potential patterns and differences in the responses provided by officers.

Thank you for being curious about the pattern and differences of the study participants. If we had seen any differences regarding the topics under discussion, we would have described them. The experiences of the participants were almost the same as participants were selected based on their experience of caring more than six injured victims in the same environment for 12 months prior to the study.

One of the most interesting issues mentioned by the participants was the "action in absence of adequate resources". A bit more of discussion of the relevance of this matter may enrich the contents and practical value of this study.

Thank you for the comment; more discussion of the matter has been added as suggested.

Please refer at page 19

Despite not having appropriate equipment for care provision, they are required to provide care as its within their job description, and is stipulated as part of their responsibilities. It is not well planned, because the police officers are left in in a dilemma: to take the risk and try to save, or not try to save. Therefore, officers are forced to save for humanitarian reasons as well as to fulfil their obligations, by improvising available materials like using personal cars for transport, plastic bags as gloves, and clothes in order to avoid direct blood contact. Unavailable equipment and supplies not only limits officers’ ability to provide quality care to RTI victims, but also puts them at risk of suffering biological, physical, chemical, and even psychosocial problems.

More and better details on the implications of the study is needed. As you have done a good work performing rigorously the research, and the results are interesting and well-supported in the discussion, a higher practical value should be given to the manuscript (e.g. how does it help to
improve current practices and experiences in trauma/injury attention? what is the main contribution of this paper?).

Thank you for the comment; The implication of the study has been added as suggested. Please refer to page 22

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

We explored experience of police officers in provision of initial care to RTI victims at the scene. Findings of this study revealed the important role of police officers in providing care to RTI victims at the scene. For effective outcome of post-crash care, such care needs to be appropriate, timely and safe. To equip police officers better for that role, lifesaving skills and basic principle of post-crash care should be an inclusive topic in police training curriculum and one of the competencies to be acquired during their initial training. To ensure Traffic Police Officers effectively fulfil this role, the government, through the Ministry of Internal Affairs in collaboration with Ministry of Health, should provide police with necessary equipment that can be utilized in provision of basic post-crash care to RTI victims at the scene. To facilitate easy access to formal hospital care and ensure maximum outcome to RTI victims, these findings suggest the need for government efforts of establishing an organized EMS that ensure safe and appropriate continuum of care from the scene to the hospital.