Author’s response to reviews

Title: Pregnant mothers are more anemic than lactating mothers, a comparative cross-sectional study, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

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Dear editor, thank you for considering our manuscript for publication. We responded to the constructive comments of the reviewers as below.

Reviewer reports:

Ahmet Emre Eskazan (Reviewer 1): I have reviewed the manuscript entitled "Pregnant mothers are more anemic than lactating mothers, a comparative cross-sectional study". Overall the authors performed a good job, but the manuscript needs to be improved.

1) Did the degree of anemia differ according to the gestational age among pregnant women? (for example patients in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy are more anemic than patients in first-second trimesters, etc.) This should be shared and discussed.

Yes the degree of anemia differs with the gestational age, table 3 shows this. We added the following statement under table 3,

“The degree of anemia defers with the gestational age of pregnant mothers, per one week increase in the age of gestation her hemoglobin will decrease by 0.02 g/dl. That means the higher the gestational age the risk of becoming anemic will also become high.”
2) What were the reasons for not receiving iron supplementation? These should be stated.

   The main reason for not getting iron during pregnancy was unavailability of the drug.

3) In their patient cohort, especially for the pregnant women, did the authors witness any morbidities and mortalities which could be attributed to anemia during the follow-up? This should be stated as well.

   We have adjusted for the following illness that potentially affect their hemoglobin status

   - Malaria
   - Abortion
   - Hook worm infection

Alauldeen Mudhafar Zubair, M.D. (Reviewer 2): Dear author,

Please make the following corrections:

1) Add location of the study to the title
   
   Done

2) Refer to hemoglobin as concentration not count.
   
   Done

3) Clarify whether only Hb was measured by Mindray analyser or a full CBC (with MCV,MCH,...).
The Mindray hematology analyzer actually analyses the full CBC with MCV, MCH. But our interest was to analyze total hemoglobin concentration.

4) The study has focused on prevalence of iron deficiency anaemia and its well-known risk factors like hookworms, parity, iron supplement and tea consumption. However without RBC indices, it is impossible to know for sure what type of anaemia the study population is suffering from. This is a major flaw of this study.

Yes it is difficult to identify the exact cause of anemia without measuring MCV (mean corpuscular volume), MCH (mean corpuscular hemoglobin), and MCHC (mean corpuscular hemoglobin concentration). But this study shows the overall prevalence of anemia and its determinants in lactating and pregnant mothers. And also gives the prevention mechanism to avert the occurrence of all type of anemia in resource limited setting.