Author’s response to reviews

Title: Epidemiology of Ebola virus disease transmission among health care workers in Sierra Leone, May to December 2014: a retrospective descriptive study

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Version: 3
Date: 5 August 2015

Author’s response to reviews: see over
The Editor
Biomed Central Infectious Diseases Journal

Dear Editor,

As instructed, we have addressed all comments of the reviewers. The point-by-point changes made to the manuscript are as follows:

Reviewer: Dale Fisher

Major compulsory revisions
- Reviewed the section on ethical consideration. It is important to note that written consent was not obtained owing to the prevailing fear of infection at the time of the study.
- Provided description of the questionnaire and data collection method.
- Deleted the term “attack rate” from the Results section and used percentage instead.
- In general, deleted all sentences that the reviewer considered to be out of the scope of this study.
- Revised the last two paragraphs of the Discussion section.
- Rewrote the limitations section to include issues raised by the reviewer.
- Made slight modifications to the Conclusions and deleted recommendations 3, 4 and 5.

Minor compulsory revisions
- Reworded the relevant sections of the Abstract and toned down the Conclusion.
- Abridged the first two paragraphs of the Background section.
- Deleted the second paragraph of the Methods section.
- Deleted the subheadings in the Methods section.
- Deleted Figure 1 and reduced the excessive numbers repeated in the text as much as possible.
- The word “contact” was defined in the relevant places.
-Inserted more appropriate examples of stigmatization and included two references on HCW stigmatization.
- Deleted reference 19 and reworded the first sentence of the second paragraph of discussion.
- Addressed most of the discretionary revisions.

Reviewer: Kari Yacisin

Major compulsory revisions
- Described the structured questionnaire.
• Reworded the relevant parts of the Methods and described the detailed analyses performed.
• The reason for the differences in denominator was explained in the Methods section.
• Deleted recommendations 3 to 5 and merged 1 and 2 with the Conclusion.

Minor essential revisions
• Ensured consistency in number presentation in the text and tables.
• Included the EVD infection rate in the Background (with the relevant reference) and compared this with the rate in the general population.
• Added a reference to support the sentence “Transmission appears most likely to occur in advanced disease when the viral load is high. . .”
• Changed Figure 3 from a doughnut-shaped pie chart to a conventional pie chart.
• Addressed the disparities in wording, numbers, and percentage between the text and tables.
• Inserted Table 5.
• Provided further description of the key informant interviews in the Methods.
• Defined “negligence” and “overconfidence”.
• Explained why IPC training received during general medical education may have been rudimentary.
• Rewrote the limitations to include issues such as data quality problems, reasons for delays in seeking care, and so on.
• Rephrased the second sentence of the Conclusions.
• Addressed most of the discretionary revisions.

In addition to the above, we also deleted or reworded several sentences and addressed other minor comments raised in the reviewers’ comments. We expanded on the roles of two authors, MC and FK, in line with the authors’ guidelines. We submitted the manuscript to a copy editor (Edanz Global Group) for proofreading and editing. The references were checked to ensure that they are relevant and in the format used by your journal. Finally, we rephrased the title of the manuscript in line with your Journal’s guidelines.

We are therefore resubmitting the manuscript for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,

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