Author’s response to reviews

Title: Epidemiology of non-traumatic spinal cord injury in Uganda: a single center, prospective study with MRI evaluation

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Author’s response to reviews:

Major comments:

Comment# 1 Methods: Parameters for the MRI imaging (resolution, TR/TE, etc) are missing entirely.

Response: This is now included in the method section on line 57 and 58 page 6

Comment# 2 Results: No statistical tests to quantitatively assess the actual difference between different groups of study population.

Response: P values have been included in Table 1 line 102 page 8 and 9

Comment# 3 Discussion: While MRI is a useful modality, as authors point out, the modality rare and expensive. Authors also point out that the etiological diagnosis of non-traumatic SCI are usually established by collating information obtained from not only the MRI scans, but also CSF analyses, blood studies, Chest X-Ray findings, non-neurological illnesses and responses to
treatments, as well as CT. In most cases, these alternative methods are probably cheaper and more widely available. Brief discussion on "Why MRI?" is necessary.

Response: edits have been made in the discussion line 174-179 page 13

Comment# 4 Discussion: Authors need to provide actual numbers so readers can quantitatively compare results from different parts of the world, without having to look up each reference. An example sentence would be: "The HIV prevalence rates among our participants with non-traumatic SCI 141 are less than in Nigeria [18], comparable to Ethiopia [22], but less than South Africa [6]." Please give exact numbers. This actually applies to the entire paragraph this sentence belongs to. If possible, one should also perform statistical test to determine whether the difference is statistically significant.

Response: edits have been made in the discussion line 150 page 12, line 166 and 169 page 12 to include figures

Minor comments:

Comment# 5 Title: The authors put a lot of emphasis on extradural lesions, yet such point is missing in the title. Something that better gets the key points across to audience would ensure more readership. This is strictly only a suggestion.

Response: The title has changed to capture the idea of the changing epidemiology from extradural to intradural and hence the increasing role of MRI.

Comment# 6 Abstract: Statement regarding the relevance of the HIV in the study population is missing. In general, abstract is not too effective at conveying the key findings of the study.

Response: the whole abstract has been edited

Comment# 7 Background: More in-depth description and statement of importance of the extradural and intradural lesions should be provided, as this seems to be one of the core findings of the study.

Response: this has been done on pages 4 lines 17-20 and 5 lines 21-27