Author’s response to reviews

Title: Prevalence and Risk Factors for Non-use of Antenatal Care Visits: Analysis of the national 2010, South Sudan Household Survey

Authors:

Ngatho S Mugo (n.mugo@hotmail.com)
Michael J Dibley (michael.dibley@sydney.edu.au)
Kingsley Agho (k.agho@uws.edu.au)

Version: 5 Date: 27 November 2014

Author’s response to reviews: see over
Author’s response to Referee 1

Reviewer: Angelo Nyamtema

Title of MS: Prevalence and Risk Factors for Non-use of Antenatal Care Visits in South Sudan: Evidence from South Sudan Household Survey, 2010

MS No.: 2012155437132335

Authors:
Ngatho S Mugo n.mugo@hotmail.com
Michael J Dibley michael.dibley@sydney.usyd.edu.au
Kingsley E Agho k.ago@uws.edu.au

Version: 4 Date: 16 September 2014

Author’s response to Reviewer 1: In the manuscript the new information were highlighted in yellow. See below for the response.

Title
The title consists of repetition of words “South Sudan”, and the word “evidence” sounds better for interventional than survey results. The author can consider to re-written it.

Response: We agree and have edited the title as suggested (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript line 1-2).

Introduction
Para 1, sentence 2: state how high is the maternal mortality. The authors need also to describe the availability and accessibility of ANC services in South Sudan.

Response: We agree and have edited the text above (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript line 83-84, 89-92).
Results
1) Paragraph under characteristics of the study sample: Sentence 1- sounds like a title of a table and the sentence sounds like a part of methods and not the results.

Response: We agree and have removing some text to improve the sentence and had added additional information on the title of table one (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript table 1).

There are many places where it is written in brackets “data not shown” – this was not clear to me - I did not understand what the authors meant here. If they meant that the data are not in table – not every data should in table format.

Response: We agree and have removed the (data not shown) form the manuscript to avoid confusion.

2) There some conclusive statements in the results e.g. the sentence in line number 241 states “Many socio-demographic factors do influence the use of ANC services in South Sudan.” Authors should consider deleting or re-writing all such conclusive statements in the results.

Response: We agree and have edited the text above (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript line 252-255).

Discussion
The second paragraph explains the value of the manuscript, partly on how it was done and some limitations of the study. I recommend that this be re-written and combined with the limitations of the study at the end of the discussion.

Response: We structure the second paragraph the limitation section base on the Docherty and Smith (1999) that recommended the limitation to be stated at the beginning. Thus, we feel that it’s ok not to move the paragraph to the end of the discussion. No changes were made (see below for the references).


Tables
Instead of having a long table for baseline characteristics with just numbers and %, the authors can also consider adding a new column in table 2 for numbers and % of each factor.
Response: We feel that adding a line of baseline characteristics (table 1) into prevalence (table 2) will make table 2 confusing and too large. Therefore, no changes were made.
Author’s response to Referee 2
Reviewer: Innocent Semali

Title of MS: Prevalence and Risk Factors for Non-use of Antenatal Care Visits in South Sudan: Evidence from South Sudan Household Survey, 2010
MS No.: 2012155437132335

Authors:
Ngatho S Mugo n.mugo@hotmail.com
Michael J Dibley michael.dibley@sydney.usyd.edu.au
Kingsley Agho k.agho@uws.edu.au

Version: 4 Date: 28 October 2014

Author’s response to Reviewer 2: In the manuscript the new information’s were highlighted in yellow. See below for the response

Reviewer's 2 report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
An attempt to pose the research question starts on line “83” that says “In South Sudan, many underlying socio-economic and environmental factors influence the use of ANC by pregnant women”. But line “85” another sentence says “Although factors affecting ANC utilization have been examined in other settings to date there has not been any study in South Sudan”. While this paragraph is expected to posit the research problem there is use of conflicting messages.

Response: We agree and have edited the text above (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript line 94-96).
This section runs short of articulating a conceptual framework that will guide the data collection and analysis. Thus one cannot get an intuition of the study variables at this stage and thus leaves the reader guessing widely. The study could also benefit from a section describing the health system of South Sudan and related contexts.

Response: We agree and have edited the text above and added additional information to clarify the conceptual framework (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript line 155, 157-158, 160-164).

Also we have added additional information describing the health system in South Sudan (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript line 89-92.)

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
Though the data is sound it is an analysis of secondary data that could be in public domain, it is not clear whether permission or notification to use the data was done.

Response: We agree and added additional information to Ethical approval section (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript line 196-199).

Furthermore in other areas i.e sample size calculations; it is also not clear whether what is reported is what the author did OR it was the authors of the main study.

Response: we think that we have clearly explained the sample size, no changes was made to the section.

There are statements like “based on other surveys” this requires a citation of those surveys but it is not provided.

Response: We agree and provided the references (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript line 127).

This section will better if there is place Maternal and Child Health services in South Sudan are presented.

Response: we could not understand what the review meant further explanation is needed.

The sample size and study population sections lack logical flow for example line “127” a sentence start “Among 11,568 of eligible woman 9,069 were interviewed and the response rate was 78.4%.” this sentences should be the starting sentence with logical flows to the actual sample to be analyzed.

Response: We agree and have rewritten the sentence (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript line 133-136).
There is lack of clarity whether the none-use analysis is based on any ANC attendance or the WHO modification on minimum of four visits, hence definition of non-ANC visit is needed and show evidence it has been used in the analysis.

Response: We have edited the definition of non-ANC services to make it clear (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript or bellow line 151-152).

The term: non-skilled ANC services refers to women receiving no ANC services at all or woman receiving any pregnancy-related services provided by non-SBAs such as traditional birth attendants, community health workers, relatives and or friends. We have also showed that throughout the report.

Results should also focus on non-use of ANC. In line 215 a sentence start “Pregnant women from the Central, Western Equatoria, Western Baher el Ghazal and Upper Nile states were more likely to utilize the recommended number of four ANC visits compared to their counterparts from the rest of the states.”

Response: We have edited the sentence to make it clear and removed the above sentence to avoid confusion. (See highlighted section in the attached manuscript line 227-230).

The sentence and many other in the results chapter should quantify the results rather than simple more likely, it should also tell the reader the statistical significance of the results. Also a result whose data is not shown is as good as no results Otherwise the tables and figures are clear and genuine.

Response: We have point to the result, which are presented in the table; therefore, we have not made any changes for this section.

The results saying that geographical areas were significantly associated with non-use should state the comparison place and not as stated “states were more likely not to utilize ANC services compared to other states of South Sudan”. In other words it should adhere to relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

Response: We agree and have edited the sentence to adhere to relevant standards for reporting and data deposition (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript line 259-260).

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Discussions should focus on the important results of the study in the contexts of the existing knowledge or what is already known while providing a synthesis. Otherwise one should explain the meaning of the findings and why they are of importance to the system. It should also refrain from inflating the speculations which might push the story beyond limits resulting to conclusions not supported by
The introduction should start from general contexts to more specific contents in a logical flow. For example in the first paragraph authors give a general statement about the problem this study will contribute, show its magnitude globally, in Africa and South Sudan. It should then be narrowed down to more specific problem while demonstrating the scope, focus and in the contexts of time and place. A number of sentences lack logical and relevant flow for example in line “75” there is a sentence starting “Therefore, ANC is one of the most effective methods to improve pregnancy outcomes in less-developed countries, including South Sudan”. It is a conclusion deriving authority from the preceding sentences but none of preceding sentences presents the expected information to allow the
conclusion. Such sentences are several, including disjointed flow of ideas and need to be revisited.

Response: We have revised the manuscript and made changes and corrections as suggested. We also have added additional information on the background information and changed the order of some sentences (see highlighted section in the attached manuscript see line 67-70, 75)