Author’s response to reviews

Title: Establishing partnership with Traditional Birth Attendants for improved maternal and newborn health: a review of factors influencing implementation

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Version: 2 Date: 25 Aug 2016

Author’s response to reviews:

Thank you for all the comments. Comments and responses are below:

Reviewer comment

Background, page 4, line 58: change "midwife training" into "midwifery training" (also at page 8, line 145).

Author's response

Changes made

Reviewer comment

Background, page 5, line 64-5: change "skilled birth attendant" into "SBA"; line 67-8: Omit sentence beginning with "Further details .."; line 76: change "of" in "with"; lines 77-80: insert references 8-10 here

Author's response

Changes made
Reviewer comment

Methods, page 6, line 102-3: change the sentence in "A further 14 sources were also identified, containing descriptions

Author's response

Change made

Reviewer comment

I miss a paper by Roggeveen Y et al. in Health 2013; 5: 71-83 about linking Masai TBAs to facility delivery in Tanzania (uploaded).

Author's response

Thank you for this reference. Although this is of interest and importance more generally, the secondary analysis we have undertaken is specifically concerned with stakeholder experiences of partnerships and new roles for TBAs and the barriers and facilitators to implementation of partnerships and new roles. The focus of this new reference is on reasons for low use of skilled birth attendants and makes important recommendations for different ways of working with TBAs to overcome phase 1 delay in deciding to seek care, but its primary focus is not on how these new roles are currently being implemented, or perspectives on these new roles, which is the focus of our paper

Reviewer comment

Results, page 7, line 117: change into: "evaluated the use of different study designs".

Author's response

Change made
Reviewer comment

Results, page 8, line 136: omit either "experiences" or "perspectives" reducing this to one line!

Author's response

“perspectives” deleted

Reviewer comment

Results, page 9, line 163 is unclear as "they" could be facility staff or TBAs and I am sure you mean TBAs; I suggest ".. a low opinion of TBAs, and thereby making them feel unwelcome"; line 169: omit "the".

Author's response

Changes made

Reviewer comment

Results, page 11, line 224-5: remove one of the two "also's"! line 238: change "normal births" in "uncomplicated births"; line 239: change "with in" in "within".

Author's response

Changes made

Reviewer comment

Discussion, page 13, line 270: "TBA partnership working" is unclear; I guess you mean: partnering (or linking) TBAs with the formal health system.
Author's response

Changed to

“Our analysis has identified that in countries where TBAs have been encouraged to work in more collaborative ways with formal health systems”

Reviewer comment

Discussion, page 13, line 284: you refer to what is "also identified in the literature". This needs then references!

Author's response

References added [4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 23, 28]

Reviewer comment

Discussion, page 13, lines 276-8: In your response to reviewer comments you introduced a sentence ("This includes ..), which is not proper english and I also did not find this in the manuscript.

Author's response

Now changed to

“As old practices change and new ways of working in partnership are introduced this can affect working relationships between TBAs and SBAs. For example, our analysis highlights rivalry and competition for the same clients and implies unequal power relations between TBAs and formal health workers who may have a low opinion of TBAs”
Reviewer comment

What I miss in the paper is the fact that women generally feel unsupported by SBA as far as emotional aspects are concerned while generally this is the strength of TBAs!

Author's response

Lines 283-286 new addition to sentence “However, when programmes placed emphasis on culturally appropriate skilled care and included roles for TBAs, this was regarded positively by women and families who may previously have felt emotionally unsupported by SBAs in formal health services” [19, 27, 31].

Reviewer comment

I once wrote a viewpoint on this in Trop Med Int Health 2005; 10: 393-4. When this is not addressed in TBA interventions, results will not be satisfactory relating to disrespect of SBAs in health facilities

Author's response

Thank you for bringing this paper to our attention. It does help to support the argument we make around culturally sensitive and appropriate skilled care and we have added it as a supporting reference in the discussion on line 288 [31]

We have added the full reference to the reference list