Author’s response to reviews

Title: Measuring the quality of maternal and care processes at the time of delivery in sub-Saharan Africa: Development and validation of a short index

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Author’s response to reviews:

March 29, 2019

To the Editors of BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth:

Attached, please find the revision of our manuscript formerly entitled “Development and validation of a short index to measure the quality of care processes at and immediately following delivery in sub-Saharan Africa.”

A point by point response is provided here to the changes requested by the Editors on March 7, 2019. Page and line numbers below refer to the revised documents. The manuscript files submitted do not have changes tracked or highlighted.

1. Please see the attachment for some edits suggested by the Section Editor.

Authors’ response: All changes requested by the Section Editor have been made. These changes are in:

- Line 59: removal of “with skilled birth attendants”
• Lines 97-98: inclusion of the barrier to observation identified by the Section Editor

• Line 253: the line identified as unclear by the Section Editor (“women arrived later in the L&D process…”) has been deleted, as it is not essential to the content of this paragraph, and is similar to our prior paper.

• Table 1: The order of “prepares uterotonic” and “uses partograph” have been reversed, in response to the Section Editor comment. However, we would like to clarify that “prepares uterotonic” is not intended to be a third stage action – “correctly administers uterotonic”, noted later in the index, is intended to be the third stage action. The expert group that reviewed the index for face validity concurred that readiness to administer the uterotonic (preparing the drug) should occur earlier than the third stage, and the use of the partograph may occur at any time throughout the observed process.

2. The overlap in the tables and in the Methods is understandable. However, where possible, please reduce the remaining overlap in the text of the Results by changing the wording of new results to be less similar to the wording used in the previous paper.

Authors’ response: Further changes have been made in the Results and Discussion sections to reflect the remaining overlap. These changes are incorporated in lines 252-258, 264-265, 277-301, 322-329, 348-361 in the revised manuscript. Other changes already made to reduce similarity to our earlier paper were noted in prior reviewer responses and are summarized below.

3. Please include the reference numbers for the IRB approvals in the Ethics approval and consent to participate statement in the Declarations.

Authors’ Response: The IRB reference number has been added to this section of the Declarations (lines 418-419).

4. Please remove everything other than “not applicable” from the Consent to publish statement.

Authors’ Response: This change has been made (line 425).

Thank you for the opportunity to resubmit this manuscript.
Best,

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Prior revisions to address similarity to our prior paper:

1. Title changed – The title was flagged by the plagiarism scoring software and has been revised.

2. Tables 1, 2, and 3 have been removed and references to the prior study/article [reference 39] have been added.

3. All three supplementary materials have been removed. Citations 39 and 45 are provided for the content in Supplement 1, and citation 39 for the content in Supplements 2 and 3.

4. Textual revisions to reduce similarity to citation 39 can be found in:

   • The description of the sample included in analysis (lines 246-257), addressing the deletion of the original Table 3.

   • The descriptions of study limitations (lines 345-354).

   • The description of program implications (line 362-387).

5. Textual revisions to acknowledge our prior study and the rationale for the current comparative validation study can be found in:
• A description of the development of the earlier comprehensive index and its limitation in use (lines 99-103).

• A description of the explicitly comparative rationale for and approach of this study (lines 107-113)

• A description of earlier comprehensive index as a reference point, and the methods used in its development and validation (lines 116-130).

• Explicit confirmation that the validation measures and analytic sample used in the current paper are identical to those used to develop the earlier, comprehensive index, in order to enable appropriate comparison (lines 176-178, 257-258).

6. Reference 3 was replaced to reflect updated data in the two years since the paper was originally submitted.