Author’s response to reviews

Title: Major obstetric haemorrhage in Metro East, Cape Town, South Africa: a population-based cohort study using the Maternal Near Miss approach

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Author’s response to reviews:

Subject: response letter revised Manuscript
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Amsterdam, 10 October 2019

Dear Editor and reviewers, Mr Altraigey, Mr Abbas and Mr Nassr,

Thank you for the positive feedback and useful suggestions to improve the article "Major obstetric haemorrhage in Metro East, Cape Town, South Africa: a population-based cohort study using the Maternal Near Miss approach (PRCH-D-19-00814 )", for publication in BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth.

Herewith I would like to respond to your comments.

Dear Mr Altraigey, Reviewer 1

Comment 1:
Although the approach was innovative the results did not go with the common knowledge or statistics 40% of the study population had placental abruption more than atony or placental adherence which are more common and can be missed as well even transfusion reaction can lead to near miss. Moreover I was confused about primary and secondary outcomes of your article. Finally data collection started 2014 till 2015 and submission is nowadays why you did not think to include more data from the following years.
Moreover I was confused about primary and secondary outcomes of your article.

Answer 1:
The result of placental abruption as the main cause for the Maternal Near Miss in the haemorrhage group came as a surprise to us as well, since the international literature shows atonic uterus to be the main cause. The presented data, however, represent consecutive women who met the MNM criteria since they were assessed and collected by visiting all wards on a daily basis. An explanation for the outcome in our hospital can be that uterine atony can be solved with less than 5 RBC and therefore is less frequent in this specific MNM population. The comment in our discussion about a possible underestimation of atony is clarification of the difficulty of defining and categorizing diagnoses. The reviewer invites us to elucidate the primary and secondary outcomes of our article. We summarized our purpose of the study at the end of the introduction “Aims were to assess incidence, case fatality rate, causes, management and outcomes of MOH, examine factors associated with poor outcome and evaluate clinical practice regarding massive blood transfusion, in Metro East region, South Africa. In the near future, this may contribute to revised guidelines in an attempt to further reduce severe maternal outcome by MOH.” These multiple items cannot easily be transformed into primary and secondary outcome parameters, and thus we choose to address them systematically throughout the manuscript.

Comment 2:
I recommend additional statistical review

Answer 2:
The present statistical examination has been evaluated with our statistician whether additional statistical review is permitted or possible. We are confident that the analysis was done properly for this population.

Comment 3:
Needs some language corrections before being published

Answer 3:
Language corrections were made according to the BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth submission guidelines, the responses have been included through track changes.

Dear Mr Abbas, Reviewer 2
Comment 4:
The authors present a well-designed study with proper results and discussion in important topic. It adds much more to the literature

Answer 4:
Thank you very much.

Dear Mr Nassr, Reviewer 3
Comment 5:
Well written study. The topic is of interest to the general reader. Clear methods and results.
Answer 5:
Thank you very much.

We hope you consider our study favorably after the comments and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

on behalf of all the authors,

Anke Heitkamp