Author’s response to reviews

Title: Increasing Utilisation of Perinatal Services: Estimating the Impact of Community Health Worker program in Neno, Malawi

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Author’s response to reviews:

Responses to the review of the paper “Increasing Utilisation of Perinatal Services: Estimating the Impact of Community Health Worker program in Neno, Malawi”

Authors
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Elizabeth L. Dunbar
Samuel Watson
Katie Cundale
Henry Makungwa
The editor, BMC Pregnancy and Child Health,

Thank you for reviewing our manuscript. We have revised the paper and please see the revisions below:

Comment 1
In the Ethics approval and consent to participate section, please clarify whether ethics approval was obtained in Malawi/ which ethics committee was in Malawi.

Response: Thank you very much for pointing this out.
We have included the name of ethics and review board that approved the study in Malawi.
Line 425-430

“The study received ethical clearance in Malawi from the Malawi National Health Sciences Research Committee protocol number 1216, as well as in South Africa from the University of Cape Town Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee protocol number 647/2017. Permission for the study was also granted by the local Ministry of Health in Neno District.”

Comment 2
If consent was not required, please include a statement on whether the need for consent was waived by an IRB or if national guidelines have established that studies such as this doesn’t require consent. Please be sure to include this statement in both the Methods and the Ethics approval and consent to participate section.
Response: Thank you very much.
See line 232
“Due to nature of the data, the need for informed consent was waived.”
Also see line 431-436
“The study is a retrospective evaluation of a CHW program that was implemented as part of routine clinical work. As a result, the study reviewed the facility changes as a result of a CHW program intervention. No patient participants were prospectively enrolled. The data used was obtained from facility monthly reports and therefore is de-identified and aggregated at facility
level cluster. As the data used was routinely collected facility aggregated and de-identified data, the Malawi ethics board waived the need for informed consent”.

Comment 3
Please also state the role of the funding body in the design of the study, collection, analysis, interpretation of data, and in writing the manuscript, in the Funding section
Response: Thank you very much for pointing this out. We have included the role of funding as below:

Line 441-443
“The CHW intervention was implemented with funding from Margaret A Cargill foundation. The funder had no role in the design of the study, collection, analysis and interpretation of data and in writing of the manuscript”

Comment 4
We note that CK, LN, DP, and TG are included in the Authors list, but is no included in the Authors' Contributions. Please ensure that the initials correctly correspond with the names listed and that all authors are included in this section.
Response: Thank you very much for pointing this out. We have included author contributions of all authors as shown below:

Line 445-449
"CK, JD, HM, EW, ED, CM, LN and KC designed and implemented the CHW program in Neno District. CK, JD, HM, EW, ED, CM, LN, DP, TG, JS and KC designed the study. ED and CK extracted, cleaned and aggregated the data. CK and SW performed data analysis. CK wrote the initial draft of the manuscript. KC, JS, DP, EW, and TvdA provided extensive revisions of the initial manuscript and data interpretation. All authors approved the final version for publication."

Comment 5
Please proofread and ensure that when you upload your revised submission it is in the final form for publication. Please remove any tracked changes or highlighting and include only a single clean copy of the manuscript. Should you wish to respond to these revision requests, please include the information in the designated input box only
Response: Thank you very much. We have read the paper and provided edits where necessary.