Author’s response to reviews

Title: Maternal socio-demographic and psychological predictors for risk of developmental delays among young children in Mongolia

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Version: 2 Date: 17 Aug 2017

Author’s response to reviews:

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BMC Pediatrics

August 16, 2017

RE: BPED-D-17-00033R1, Maternal socio-demographic and psychological predictors for risk of developmental delays among young children in Mongolia
Dear Dr. Santosh,

I am pleased to resubmit the revised version of our manuscript entitled “Maternal socio-demographic and psychological predictors for risk of developmental delays among young children in Mongolia” with ID No. BPED-D-17-00033R1, for your consideration. We greatly appreciate the suggestions from the reviewers and have responded accordingly. We have highlighted all changes in gray in the revised manuscript.

Thank you very much for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

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RESPONSE TO THE REVIEWERS

Manuscript ID BPED-D-17-00033R1

We are grateful to the reviewers for their comments on our manuscript. We have modified the paper in response to the extensive and insightful reviewer comments.

RESPONSE TO REVIEWER Dr. Judi Mesman

1. Comment: I accept the authors' explanations and answers in response to most of my comments. I have two remaining concerns. I would encourage the authors to include the Figure with the theoretical model in the manuscript, and/or explicitly describe the model and how each of their variables relate to the model (as they have done in the response letter, but not in the manuscript). This will elevate the paper to a level above the study of seemingly random variables.

Response: We have explained the framework by the Walker et al (as used in this research) and described how each of their variables relate to the model in our manuscript under the subtitle Exposure and outcome in the Methods section (line 135-148, page 8-9) as follows:
According to the framework used in this study [1], risk factors on child development in developing countries can be grouped into four main domains including poverty, socio-cultural factors, biological factors and psychosocial factors. Based on this framework, we made effort to include the main factors from each of the different domains. Poverty level was described by wealth index while for socio-cultural risk factors, we included child gender and maternal education to reflect gender inequity and low maternal education. Biological risks factors included variables representing prenatal and postnatal growth such as delivery mode, gestational age at birth, birthweight, apgar score, transcutaneous bilirubin level, season of birth and exclusive breastfeeding. Biological factors specific to the mother were parity, history of miscarriage, and disease during pregnancy. For psychosocial risks factors, we included environmental and parenting factors such as family crowding, maternal work, single mother household and maternal depression symptoms. Impairment in child development was thereafter assessed in seven child developmental domains.

2. Comment: Although the authors present some statistical support for their sample size, it is still a small sample which - to the authors admission - hampers certain more sophisticated analyses, which should be acknowledged in the section on the study's limitations in the Discussion. These limitations are significant, but can be overlooked given the uninqueness of the data.

Response: We take the reviewers comment seriously and have revised the Discussion section (line 318- 320, page 18) to reflect this limitation as follows:

“Lastly, although the sample size was calculated based on robust statistical methods, we included only a small sample of participants in the study which may have hampered more sophisticated analyses.”

We thank all the reviewers for their insightful comments for improving the quality and content of our manuscript.

References