**Author's response to reviews**

**Title:** Knowledge and Attitude towards Rape and Child Sexual Abuse - a community-based cross-sectional study in Rural Tanzania

**Authors:**

Muzdalifat S Abeid (muzsalim@yahoo.com)
Projestine S Muganyizi (promuga@yahoo.com)
Siriel N Massawe (snanzia@gmail.com)
Rose C Mpembeni (rcmpembeni@yahoo.com)
Elisabeth Darj (elisabeth.darj@kbh.uu.se)
Pia Axemo (pia.axemo@kbh.uu.se)

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**Author’s response to reviews:** see over
23rd December 2014

To the Editor-in-Chief

BMC Public Health

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: MS: 2061855622140768

Knowledge and Attitude towards Rape and Child Sexual Abuse - a community-based cross-sectional study in Rural Tanzania

Thank you for sending our manuscript to reviewers. On behalf of the authors, I am pleased to submit a revised version of the above referenced manuscript in response to the reviewers’ comments.

The comments of the reviewers were very valid with a good intention of improving the manuscript. We have made efforts to respond to all the comments given by the reviewers which we believe have improved our manuscript considerably.

Our responses to the reviewers’ comments are presented on the following pages. We hope you will find the manuscript of interest to readers of BMC Public Health.

Yours sincerely

Muzdalifat Abeid
muzsalim@yahoo.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Authors’ response</th>
<th>Changes made</th>
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</table>
| **1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?**  
Yes. This was a community-based cross sectional study on knowledge and attitude towards rape and child sexual abuse in rural Tanzania. This is an important topic with a broad range of health and human rights issues. | Thank you for this comment. | None |

| **2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?**  
No.  
Background/References  
This section and particularly the references need up-dating.  
Include references particularly from the region. These will be useful when making comparisons in the discussion. (major)  
Methods  
In the setting, state the literacy rate for males and females. (minor)  
The methods are not explicit on how confidentiality was ensured during the interviews. (minor)  
Since rape and child sexual abuse are sensitive subjects, how was the safety of the interviewers ensured, especially since most of them were women? (minor)  
In the analysis, the authors do not state whether they adjusted for the design effect since they used a multi-stage sampling procedure. (major) | Taken into consideration and revised this section. In addition, we included the relevant regional references as suggested.  
We have stated the literacy rate for males and females.  
We have elaborated on how confidentiality was ensured under methods and ethical consideration.  
We obtained permission from the district up to the village level. All interviewers were introduced by the local leader to the household members before the interviews.  
We had adjusted for the design effect during sample size calculation. But also during analysis adjusted for the design effects. The confidence intervals showed tendency to increase in the third decimal point but not significant. | Line 110-115, 133-138. See references 18-26, 36-39 tainted in red  
Changes tainted red, line 164-166  
Line 189-190  
And 275-277 tainted in red  
Changes tainted in red line 206-209  
Changes elaborated and tainted red in Method section Page 6, line 181-184, line 256 |

| **3. Are the data sound?**  
No  
Since there were two dependent variables i.e. 1) knowledge on sexual violence and its associated factors, and 2) attitudes to sexual violence and its associated factors, it is reasonable to expect that the results section will be organised in a similar manner for | Agreed. We have rearranged the result section according to suggestions. | Under result section page 10-11 |
purposes of clarity. (major)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 5</th>
<th>Table 6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This table is difficult to interpret. You need to add a column for knowledge on sexual violence (good) to the right of the Number column. (major)</td>
<td>This table is also difficult to interpret. Add a column for attitude towards sexual violence (non-accepting) to the right of the Number column. (major)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have adopted the suggestion.</td>
<td>We have adopted the suggestion for this table as well.</td>
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4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation? Yes

- Thank you. None

5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes

- Thank you for this comment. None

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? No

- We tried to balance the discussion and conclusion and included regional references for comparison. Discussion section page 12-13

Discussion
This section needs re-organization just like the results section. As it is, the discussion jumps back and forth between knowledge on sexual violence and attitudes which obscures the clarity of the messages. The discussion has focused on some of the results and left out other results – all the results should be discussed. The depth of the discussion also needs improvement. Comparisons particularly with regional studies need to be made and explanations given for any differences found. (major)

- We have re-organized the discussion part according to suggestions. Under discussion section page

Conclusions
As stated above, go beyond the results and state the implications of the findings of the study. (major)

- Agreed. We have gone beyond the results and stated the implications of study findings. Under conclusion page 15, lines 417-420, 423-425

7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Partly

- Strengths and limitations Among the strengths you should also include the large sample, population based study, random sampling methods, and high Agreed. We have included these strengths. Lines 393-400
response rate. Among the limitations, you should also include the sensitive nature of the subject that is often associated with shame, and how this could have influenced your results. Also, what did you do to minimize the effect of these limitations? (minor)

8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes. As stated earlier, update the references particularly with comparable work from the region. (major)

9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? No. In the conclusion, the statement “Knowledge and attitude towards sexual violence is correlated with socio-demographic characteristics” is vague. Be specific. Secondly, go beyond the results and state the implications of these findings. (major)

10. Is the writing acceptable? Yes, though there are some minor corrections. (minor)

**Reviewer 2**

1. Question is well defined Thank you for this comment. None

2. Need for better description of study design, line 143. Perhaps: A cross-sectional, multi-stage, randomized, survey study was undertaken in May and June 2012.

   We have adopted your suggestion Line 145 under study design section.

   a. Under data collection and methods, p. 7, line 193, make the following minor change: “A pilot-tested and standardized baseline questionnaire was used. It elicited data on…..”

   Agreed on this minor correction. Changes highlighted in red Changes made in red line 193.

   b. Given that over 40% of the sample was men on p. 8, line 218, it seems that something about how interviews with men ended should be added. Perhaps simply dropping ‘other’ from line 218 would

   Agreed on this suggestion. Removed the word ‘other’ from line 218
<p>| | | |</p>
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<td>meet the need.</td>
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<td>3. The data appear sound.</td>
<td>Thank you for this comment.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Figures appear genuine.</td>
<td>Appreciate your observation</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Paper meets relevant standards.</td>
<td>Agreed. Thank you</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. For the most part the discussions and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported. Some minor recommendations:</td>
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<td>a. The paragraph on p.12, beginning line 341, is somewhat disjointed. The finding that men were less supportive of gender stereotypes and rape myths than women is important and may highlight the effect of on-going educational projects. The project “men as partners’ deserves some description. Is it educational? How is it delivered? Would an appropriate recommendation be that similar projects be developed for younger men and women? Does it help address the issues related to low education and status, poverty, and rural residency?</td>
<td>We have elaborated the project “men as partner”</td>
<td>Lines 365-370</td>
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<td>b. For the same paragraph, line 344, drop ‘it’ so that the sentence reads: “Women who may be potential victims of violence justified and endorsed the rape myths.”</td>
<td>Agreed. Changes made according to suggestion</td>
<td>Removed the word ‘it’ in line 360</td>
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<td>c. The final sentence in that paragraph is not needed. It simply repeats the purpose of the study.</td>
<td>We feel we should retain this last sentence, it is more of a recommendation.</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>7. Study limitations are clearly stated. Some minor recommendations for wording: a. On p. 14, line 394, change suits to suited (past tense)</td>
<td>Thank you for this observation.</td>
<td>Changes highlighted in red in line 400</td>
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<td>b. The conclusion should include a sentence about the somewhat surprising findings about men being less supportive of gender stereotypes and rape myths than women.</td>
<td>Agreed.</td>
<td>Changes highlighted in red line 418-420</td>
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<td>8. The title is focused on method not findings but does seem appropriate. To change to focus on findings, if that is important, one suggestion is something like: Among the rural poor in Tanzania men are</td>
<td>We have decided to retained the title to reflect the design as required by the Journal. However, we also feel that your finding suggestion is relevant, therefore we have in cooperated in the</td>
<td>None</td>
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less likely to endorse rape myths than younger women – just a suggestion since title works as it is.

| a. About the abstract – some very minor suggestions:  
  i. On p. 2, line 39-40, delete the final phrase ‘in the last few decades’ from the first sentence so that it reads: Violence against women and children is globally recognized as a social and human rights concern. | Agreement. | Deleted the phrase ‘in the last few decades’ line 40 |
| ii. On p. 2, line 66, add ‘have’ so that the sentence reads: “Our study showed that these rural communities have poor knowledge on sexual violence and have accepting attitudes towards sexual violence.” | Agreement. | Changes highlighted in red in line 66 |

9. The writing is generally acceptable. In addition to the suggestions above here are a few more:

| a. On p. 3, line 85, change ‘was’ to ‘is’ to keep tense consistent throughout sentence. | Agreement. | Highlighted in red in line 84 |
| b. On p. 3, lines 91 – 92, put commas after also and survey so the sentence reads: “The same study also, in a 12-month prevalence survey, has estimated...” | Agreement. | Changes tainted in red in line 103 |
| c. On p. 4, line 123, put a comma after survivors and after victims. | Agreement. | Changes tainted in red in line 123-124 |
| d. On p. 5, line 127, Delete the first word, among, so the sentence begins: “Other barriers to seeking......” | Agreement. | Deleted the word ‘among’ in line 126 |
| e. On p. 7, line 193, put a period after used and then begin a new sentence. Note the questionnaire did not contain data but elicited data therefore perhaps: “A pilot-tested and standardized baseline questionnaire was used. It elicited data on....” | Agreement. | Changes tainted in red in line 193 |

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

We have taken into consideration all language corrections suggested, but also subjected the paper for proof reading to a native English speaker.