Author’s response to reviews

Title: Factors associated with HIV counseling and testing behavior among undergraduates of universities and vocational technical training schools in Tbilisi, Georgia

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr. Minichiello:

Thank you for reviewing our manuscript entitled “Factors associated with HIV Counseling and Testing Behavior among Undergraduates of Universities and Vocational Technical Training Schools in Tbilisi, Georgia.”

We would also like to thank Ms. Irma Kirtadze for her critical comments, which helped us in further improving the quality of the manuscript. In response to her comments we would like to clarify the following:

- Actually, in the current version of the manuscript, by mistake, we have included percentages of answers “Yes” (i.e., 62% to the question “If a relative of yours became infected with HIV, would you want it to be kept a secret?”), whereas, according to the text in the lines 201 and 202, we must have included the proportion of respondents with stigmatizing attitudes (i.e. those responding “yes” or “do not know), which is 91.9%, i.e. was correctly included in Table 1, hence we did not change in the revised manuscript accordingly.

- We conducted additional literature search, and now provide better justification for selecting of the aforementioned question as a measure of stigmatizing attitude on social judgment domain (lines 207 and 208 of the revised manuscript). We added two new references #22 and 23 supporting the aforementioned justification. We have also made respective changes in the discussion text (lines 252-254) to focus on HIV stigmatizing attitude on social judgment domain.

- As for the fiction literature, we would like to reiterate that the current study is a secondary data analysis of 2010 Behavioral Surveillance Survey among School and University Students in Tbilisi, and as such, we used the measures used by the parent study. Importantly, removing this variable does not change the main results of multivariate analysis. Besides, in the discussion section (line 263-264) we say that the reasons for these findings are unclear. The rationale for leaving it
in the model is that it may be a good proxy measure of general educational activities among Georgian students, and further research may have some important implications for informing relevant interventions and programs.

A modified version of our manuscript is also included with this revision.

Sincerely,

Mamuka Djibuti
(on behalf of the authors)