Author's response to reviews

Title: Challenges and Opportunities Associated with Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Intersectoral Integration Programs

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Version: 4  Date: 24 April 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
April 24, 2015

To: BioMed Central Editorial

Re: MS: 9952942291471523
Challenges and Opportunities Associated with Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Intersectoral Integration Programs

From: Elizabeth A Johnston, Jordan Teague and Jay P Graham

To Whom It May Concern:

Below I have provided point by point responses to the suggested revisions by each peer reviewer.

Reviewer 1:

- In regards to reviewer one’s general comment – The authors took advantage of the time and willingness of each interviewee to the best of our ability. I addressed his individual concerns throughout the document, which will hopefully alleviate some of these feelings.
- Figure 1 – I removed the language from the manuscript. The figure is not present.
- Specification of stakeholder type – I added several lines to the methods section that specify the stakeholders interviewed (without being specific) and justified the reason in-country Ministry of Health, Water, Education, etc. representatives were not interviewed.
- Outline of semi-structured interviews – the interview guide was added in an appendix.
- Line 159: “This is a challenge, the WASH organizations have their own objectives, their own goals” – I addressed this comment more specifically in the discussion section.
- Line 250 “Lack of information sharing” – I addressed this further in the Lack of Information Sharing section and it is also mentioned in the discussion section.
- Line 326 “coverage versus utilization” – I believe this is outside of the scope of this paper. The utilization of WASH and specifically follow-up maintenance of WASH infrastructure does not touch on the issue that this paper is meant to look at, which is barriers and ideal condition to integration of NTD and WASH programs. This section of the paper (Indicators and Metrics) was written to address the concerns interviewees brought up about the inability for NTD and WASH sectors to work together at all if measurement tools do not overlap, and I believe this has been accomplished.
- “Focus on Mass Drug Administration” – I further address the emphasis on MDAs in the discussion section through added text. The point of this research or this manuscript is not to say that MDAs are not useful and essential, but to say that they should be complemented with interventions that aim to address the cause rather than just the symptoms.
• Line 274 “Something needs to change higher up…” – I specify in more detail the point this quote was trying to convey in the writing above it. It is also addressed in the discussion section.
• Additional interviews with field staff – The authors do not believe this is necessary because several interviews were conducted and responses from headquarter staff did not differ in theme from that of field staff. We do not believe this to be a serious bias, but do acknowledge that another analysis that looks at specific countries or in-country Ministries would be valuable for a more specific, micro look into program integration. However it is impossible to address the micro issues if the larger, macro issues are not addressed.
• Line 289 “Educational Advocacy” – I defined more specifically the point the interviewees were making and further define educational advocacy for the purposes of this paper in the text above the quotes.
• Who is them? “We need to engage them…” quote – In the text above the quote I specify that “them” are members of the WASH community.

Reviewer 2:
• Sustainable Development Goals – Reviewer 2 suggested that I add information about NTD and WASH integration in the sustainable development goals. I did not add that to the introduction because there are many other articles that address NTDs/WASH and MDGs and how they will be apart of the SDGs because targets were not reached in the MDGs. This manuscript is very long and I did not think it was worth adding another paragraph in length considering the large amount of material on the subject that is already available. If the editor believes it is necessary, however, I am willing to add something.
• Additional information on how participants were identified – I added several sentences to the methods section on this subject.
• Additional information on coding - I added several sentences to the methods section on this subject.
• Identify quotations with R1, R2 – I added Participant # to the front of each quotation as requested.
• Recommendations – I specified my recommendations in the most concise way possible.
• Similar program integration – I address this suggestion specifically in the discussion with citations.
• Passive voice for tables – I did not change this because I believe it to be stylistic, however if this is BMC’s policy I am willing to change it.
• Line 67 “dollars should not be capitalized” – Fixed.
• Countries footnote – Fixed.
• Citations to address the “momentum” – I added those in footnotes.
• Sentence on 481 – Revised.
• Sentence on 504 – Revised.
• Figure 1 – Text referencing Figure 1 was removed and the figure is not present.
The concerns were addressed in the most effective and concise way possible. The authors welcome further feedback.

Sincerely,

EA Johnston