Author’s response to reviews

Title: Predictors of Provider-Initiated HIV Testing and Counseling refusal by outpatient department clients in Wolaita zone, Southern Ethiopia: A case control study

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Author’s response to reviews:

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To: "BMC Public Health" Editorial Office" bmcpublichealth@biomedcentral.com
From: "Wolde Facha Faltamo" woldiefacha@gmail.com

Subject: Response to reviewers report

Ref No : PUBH-D-15-00945 Predictors of Provider Initiated HIV Testing and Counseling refusal by outpatient department clients in Wolaita zone, Southern Ethiopia: A case control study

Dear Mr Giovanni Rezza,

I have received your email pointing important notes on our manuscript. Thank you in advance for considering it to be published on the most popular scientific journal. I have seen the comments indicated by reviewers and addressed all of them accordingly. Also, I incorporated the comments in my revised manuscript as well and you can differentiate it easily as I colored the comments dark red.
Response to Reviewer reports:

Reviewer #1:

This is an interesting paper on reasons for refusal of HIV testing of persons in Southern Ethiopia. The subject is of eminent clinical importance since it substantially hinders screening measures which, in high prevalence settings, are effective in decreasing the infection rate, and may have individual consequences, i.e. the decision whether initiation of ART will be necessary.

Self-developed instruments were used, in addition to in-depth personal interviews. The study design using a case-control study seems adequate. The study sample was drawn adequately (consecutive sample), however, no data on the refusal rate is presented. Although case control studies allow to work with lower subject numbers, the number of patients could have been somewhat higher.

In our study there were study participants who refused HIV test (so called cases) but all cases and controls responded to the questionnaire making the response rate 100%.

Data presentation is well-done, and reliable multivariate analysis was performed. I suggest to reduce the place given for bivariate analysis since it is of limited value.

It has been corrected as suggested by reviewer.

In order to better decide whether the data is representative and could be transferred to other areas of the region, the main question I have to the authors is to more in detail describe the population of the area examined:

How many inhabitants?

Based on the 2007 census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), the population of Wolaita zone is projected to be 1,901,112 for the year 2012/13. About 49.2% were men and 11.49% were urban inhabitants.
Urban structure?

There are 355 kebele (the smallest administrative structure) in Wolaita zone of which 54 are urban and 301 are rural kebeles.

By the way, how is urban" defined in the analysis?

Urban was defined as localities of 2,000 or more inhabitants

Accessibility of the area?

Wolaita zone is located at a distance of 328 km south of capital city. All kebele has transportation access even in rainy season. There is one health center for every 5 kebele (approximately 25,000 populations) and three hospitals are evenly distributed in terms of geographic location.

Mobility?

The zonal town (Soddo) is pathway for many travellers and tourists since it has five transportation gates to nearby zonal towns.

Economic background?

The major economic activities are agriculture (production of legumes, root crops and some cereals - predominantly maize), and livestock rearing which is source of income for about 88.5% of population
The results show that patient-sided factors for refusal of testing preponderated. The interesting results need to be discussed more in depth. There is no data on the availability of antiretroviral therapy in the region - surely patients would not profit from (positive) testing if they cannot receive ART.

All hospitals and health centers were providing PITC service for OPD patients; however only three hospitals and thirteen health centers provide antiretroviral therapy (ART).

What about the knowledge about HIV in the population examined from the point of view of the authors?

As per the authors view population of the study area has good awareness on HIV since all kebele has access to media specially radio and more than 80% of study participants attended formal education.

Are there any public campaigns?

There are regular public campaigns(about 2-3 times per year) by governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Whereas the other reasons for refusal of testing are quite understandable, the factor of residing in urban area" needs some more discussion.

It is addressed in revised manuscript as indicated by reviewer.

Overall, from my point of view, this is an important study which is worth publishing.
Reviewer #2: Its an interesting research article but need some improves:

Abstract:

Best to put the odds in descending order with two digits

It has been corrected as indicated by reviewer.

Introduction:

What’s OPD? Necessary some explanation

Outpatient Department (OPD) is the department in the health facility where patients seeking medical care were investigated and managed according to his/her health problem by clinicians.

Methods and Materials:

Which the ethics committee approval number? In your country is possible the verbal informed consent?

In our country unless experimental research conducted on human being, written letter from respective organization to concerned administrative body and then informed consent from study participants or guardian is enough for ethical clearance. In our case ethical approval letter from Jimma University (Public organization) were written to Wolaita zonal health department and the office wrote formal letter of respective seven health facility. Finally informed oral consent was obtained from study participants.
**Additional Editorial Requests**

1.) Please provide the email address of all authors in the Title page.

It has been done as indicated by reviewer.

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It has been corrected as indicated by the reviewer.

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Your 'Authors Contributions' section must detail the individual contribution for each individual author listed on your manuscript.

It has been done as per reviewer suggestion.

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