Author’s response to reviews

Title: A cluster-randomized multi-level intervention to increase latrine use and safe disposal of child feces in rural Odisha, India: the Sundara Grama research protocol

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Author’s response to reviews:

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to re-submit our protocol “A cluster-randomized multi-level intervention to increase latrine use and safe disposal of child feces in rural Odisha, India: the Sundara Grama research protocol” for your consideration for open-access publication in BMC Public Health.

As advised, we have made the following changes and clarifications:

1. We have renamed the ‘Introduction’ in the abstract to be ‘Background’.

2. We confirm that we have received permissions from all the individuals mentioned within your ‘Acknowledgements’ section to be named.

3. We have renamed ‘Funding Statement’ to ‘Funding’.

4. In the funding statement we have expanded upon the role of the funder as advised. The section now reads:

   ‘This work was supported by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) [TW14.1006]. The funder has influenced the use of a common outcome measure for latrine use
as well as other variables like functionality and use to enable comparability with other ongoing trials. Specifically, before the trial was initiated, the funder organized all teams that received funding to discuss and agree upon how the outcome (latrine use) should be measured. This involved a series of email exchanges to first communicate the importance of a common outcome measure and get all teams to agree to use a common measure. The funder (3ie), along with the Research Institute for Compassionate Economics (r.i.c.e.), then worked with all teams via email by proposing a common measure and then iteratively adapting the measure based on feedback by our team and all other teams involved. Finally, 3ie held a workshop in Delhi with r.i.c.e and all funded teams, during which the outcome measure

5. The following was added to the ‘Competing Interests’ section in ‘Declarations’:

One of the authors (BAC) serves as a member of the editorial board for BMC Public Health.

6. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript. The following was added:

All authors have all read and approved of the manuscript in its final form.

7. The referencing format has been changed to Vancouver as directed in the webpage provided.

8. Collecting verbal/oral consent was approved by the ethics committee. The following rationale is now provided:

Research assistants will then ask for the participants’ verbal consent before continuing with data collection. The use of verbal consent (over written) was approved by the Institutional Review Board. Verbal consent was approved as not all adults in the engaged communities are literate and may feel vulnerable signing something they are not able to read. In some cases, women specifically may not be able to sign their name or may not feel they have the agency to sign something.

9. The Spirit Checklist was removed as directed. The old cover letter was removed. We added this one to make clear how we addressed necessary changes.

10. We have sent funding documentation to the email noted.

11. We have sent ethical documentation to the email noted. Specifically, we have included the initial IRB approval as well as the continuing review approval letters from Emory as well as the approval letter from Xavier Institute of Management in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India.

12. The manuscript has been re-uploaded in a clean (no tracked changes) version.

Thank you for your consideration and please contact me with any further questions or clarifications.
Sincerely,

Bethany A. Caruso