Author’s response to reviews

Title: Women’s Freedom of Movement and Participation in Psychosocial Support Groups: Qualitative Study in Northern India

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Thanks very much for your comments. We have revised both areas you requested.

EDITOR COMMENT 1: In your “Ethics approval and consent to participate” section of your declarations please confirm if an ethics committee approved the use of verbal consent instead of written. Please also detail how you documented the consent. Please also consider changing ‘witnessed’ to ‘provided’ in this section in order to be clear that consent was obtained from each participant.

RESPONSE 1: Below is our updated Ethics section, answering your questions:

Ethics approval and consent to participate

This study was a component of a broader project examining the challenges and enabling factors related to the implementation of Burans project, which had been granted permission as Protocol 115 in April 2014, by the Institutional Ethics Committee of the Emmanuel Hospital Association. Ethics approval for this sub-study was also obtained from the Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board of McMaster University in Canada. Based on the local context, which included low literacy rates, alongside an article in the Bulletin of the World Health Organization on informed consent in the global South[49], oral consent was deemed most appropriate. Both research ethics boards approved of the use of verbal consent. In terms of the consent process, after the study was explained and any questions were answered to the entire group, each woman in attendance was
provided with the opportunity to orally consent to participation or not participate in the study. This process was documented by the CHWs in attendance, and all women consented to participate. The risks for women participating in FGDs were minimized due to the support of Burans team members in facilitating home-based care and access to mental health care as required for all participants, and through CHW attendance at all FGDs.

EDITOR COMMENT 2: Please revise your availability of data and materials statement in your declarations. The Availability of data and materials section refers to the raw data used in your study and presenting tables and figures is not sufficient to state that all data is contained within the manuscript and additional files. Please only use this statement if you have indeed provided all raw data on which your study is based.

RESPONSE 2: Below is our updated Data Availability Section:

Availability of data and material

The datasets generated and analysed during the current study are not publicly available due to the nature of the study questions and the small size of the communities involved, but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request. Given that all PSSGs were sampled, and there are only seven PSSGs in the three communities, even with anonymized data, women could be identified and there could be risks to women’s safety based on the discussions of their inability to leave their homes.

Thanks very much for your comments and feedback.

Sincerely,

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