Author’s response to reviews

Title: POST - EFFECTS OF OBSTETRIC FISTULA IN UGANDA; A CASE STUDY OF FISTULA SURVIVORS IN KITOVO MISSION HOSPITAL (MASAKA), UGANDA

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Author’s response to reviews:

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Dear Chief Editor,

I would wish to submit my responses to the comments raised by the peer reviewers after assessment of my manuscript "POST - EFFECTS OF OBSTETRIC FISTULA IN UGANDA; A CASE STUDY OF FISTULA SURVIVORS IN KITOVO MISSION HOSPITAL (MASAKA), UGANDA" (PUBH-D-19-00112R1). These are going to be presented in a comment - response format according to the order in which the reviewer(s) presented them.
Reviewer 1: Dr Joseph Obure

The authors provided a very short background and it lacks information on rationale and justifications.

- The comment has been addressed under the background section especially in paragraphs 1, 3, 4 pages 3 & 4

The authors did not mention whether this was a cross section or prospective study in nature.

- Addressed under methods section, paragraph 1, page 5

What and how was the recruitment process, timing of recruitment, how was the interview administered? by who?, which interview methods were used?, was it face to face? or phone?

- Addressed under methods section, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4, pages 5 & 6

Where was the study conducted?

- Addressed under Results section, paragraph 2, page 6

When were the fistula repair done? From when to when?

- Addressed under methods section, paragraphs 1, & 2 under the screening criteria. However, the time frame within which the patients/survivors received fistula repairs was not captured in the data but it also varied depending on when the cases were reported as well as the scheduled time frame for the surgical camps since majority of the repairs were handled during the camps.

More descriptive statistics needed to inform the composition of study participants.

- Some of the participants descriptive statistics have been added under the Results section, paragraphs 1 & 2, pages 6 & 7.

PIE Chart - Total number (N) missing - Addressed in the attached document for Figures, page 1
I am worried as to why such an intimate study did not collect written informed consent but rather collect verbal consent. This study involved interviewing fistula survival and some questions were such intimate.

- A similar concern was raised earlier in some of the emails that were addressed to me by the chief editor before the manuscript was allocated peer reviewers. The responses/explanations to the raised concerns were readdressed through to the same correspondence address.

I wonder why the study only dealt with coping and re-integration mechanism by the fistula survivals but did not seek to find additional information on the role of health system, community and families to facilitate re-integration.

- The role of families and communities in facilitating the re-integration process is addressed under the re-integration strategies of obstetric fistula survivors section, from paragraph 2 pages 9 onwards. However, we did not have any questions on the role of the health system in the re-integration process.

Reviewer 2: Krzysztof Nowosielski, Associate Professor

The conclusions are the repletion of the results - please prepare 2-3 sentences that summarize the study and might have an impact on contemporary research on fistulas.

- All the conclusion sections in the manuscript have been revised, pages 2&15

Please elaborate on the relationship between fistulas and secondary infertility. In what mechanisms?

- This relationship has been properly defined and addressed under the Post - Effects of Obstetric Fistula among Survivors section, paragraphs 2 & 3 , pages 8 & 9

Please change the title of the table 1 to: “General characteristics of the studied population”.

- Addressed under the table and captions section, page 20 and in the attachment document for Tables, page 1
Please numerate the references and adjust then to meet the journal citation style (APA as the reviewer believe).

- This has been addressed throughout the following sections: the background, pages 3 & 4; discussion section, pages 11 - 14 and reference section, pages 18 – 20.

Other formatting comments raised:

The order of the authors listed in the title page must be the same with the order you used in the submission system - please correct so they are consistent with each other.

- The author has Checked for consistency of the order of the authors in the title page and submission system and some changes have been made on the title page under the Authors’ address, page 1.

Please rename "Methodology" as "Methods" in the abstract and rename "Methodology" as "Methods" in the manuscript body.

- The comments have been addressed under the Abstract and Methods section, pages 1 & 5 respectively.

Please rename "Findings" as "Results" in the manuscript body.

- Addressed under the Results section page 6

Please confirm and state at the end of the Author’s contributions section that "All authors have read and approved the manuscript".

- This comment has been addressed under the authors’ contribution section, page 17 by adding the statement - "All authors have read and approved the manuscript"

I have been able to address all the comments from the reviewers and I look forward to the acceptance on my manuscript for publication on the BioMed Central journal.

Yours Sincerely,

Bomboka John Bosco