Author’s response to reviews

Title: Community knowledge, perceptions and water contact practices associated with transmission of urinary schistosomiasis in an endemic region. A qualitative cross-sectional study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor,

We thank the editors for considering the review, in the revised manuscript we have considered the reviewers comments and have made improvements to the manuscript. In addition, editors comments has also been addressed.

1. Schistosomiasis prevalence in Tanzania, has been clarified and similar references (reference 12 and 11) has been double checked and one removed in the reference list

2. Population size for Butini, Miyu and Bomani sub villages has been included and the number of school children enrolled in the participating school (Ikingwamanoti) has been indicated in the study area and population section

3. The community members has been defined to comprise parents/guardians and their school children living in Ikingwamanoti village

4. The rationale for using FGD and SSI strategies has been included in the revised manuscript in methods of data and collection-methodology section.
5. Selection of participants in each category (SSI and FGD), invitation procedures, where and when the event took place has been described in methods section in the revised manuscript.

6. Demographic information of participants has been included in Table number 3 in the results section of the revised manuscript.

7. More recent references has been included, however some of the old references are still valid in relation to our study and are retained.

8. It has been stated in the methods section that the study was designed to complement quantitative findings of a large parasitological and malacological study conducted in the same area which has been published in the journal of Parasites and vectors August (2018) 11:481-9. As a qualitative study it was not designed to be powered for quantitative analysis thus including chi-squared statistical analysis is not appropriate. The calculated percentages of SSI results in Table 3 were conducted to indicate salient perceptions amongst the groups rather than to find significant differences between them.

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Title
PUBH-D-18-02061

Community knowledge, perceptions and water contact practices associated with transmission of urinary schistosomiasis in an endemic region: A qualitative cross-sectional study

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Version: 2

Date: 16th April, 2019
Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

We thank the reviewers for their helpful comments on our manuscript. Please find our replies below (italics). For clarity we have retained the original reviewer’s comments where pertinent.

Reviewer #1

Comment no 1. Background

In 2004, when schistosomiasis control interventions were launched in Tanzania with financial support from the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative (SCI) through the Ministry of Health (MoH) the overall prevalence of schistosomiasis in the country was 51.5%. By 2010 the overall prevalence of schistosomiasis in the country was higher at 53.3%[6], and was observed to be increasing with population growth [12].

SA- Reference [12] indicates that prevalence of Schistosomiasis in Tanzania is 51.5% in 2012 and not in 2004. In addition reference 11 is the same as reference 12.

Response: We thank the reviewer for this observation; we have removed reference 12 as it is similar to reference number 11. With regard to prevalence of schistosomiasis in Tanzania we have rephrased the statement to read "despite of ongoing control interventions, the prevalence of the disease still persists [10]" which we now think is more realistic as it would be practically very difficult to carry out proper mapping of a vast country like Tanzania and get precise mean prevalence estimates for the whole country.

Comment no 2: Methods

More information about the study site would be quite useful. For instance, the size of the community as well as number of schools, since part of the study population was of students.

SA: Need to add population of the sub-villages (Butini, Bomani, Miyu) and number of school children in the participating primary school.

Response: We have included the population of both sub villages (Miyu 563, Butini 783 and Bomani 753). The number of children enrolled in Ikingwamanoti primary school a participating
Comment no 3: Additional information on the study population is also necessary.

SA: Author still needs to clarify in the methodology section that the community members are: the parents/guardians and their school children because the category community members can include others who have no school children.

Response: We have clarified in the methodology part that community members comprised of parents/guardians and their school children living in Ikingwamanoti village.

Comment no 4: What was the rationale behind the need to use two different strategies, i.e., interviews and focus group discussion to collect data?

The rationale of using two different strategies in data collection i.e. focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews was to compare the results generated from the two strategies [6]. Semi-structured interviews explore more on individual views and experiences on the urinary schistosomiasis practice and perception, while focus group discussion was intended to complement SSI by providing in-depth exploration about community knowledge, practice, attitude and perception on urinary schistosomiasis in the study area.

However, FGDs are limited in terms of their ability to generalize findings to a whole population, mainly because of the small numbers of people participating and the likelihood that the participants will not be a representative sample. That is why it is advisable to complement data from focus groups with data from another method for data collection (i.e. in our case SSIs). The rationale for using two different strategies is because validity of qualitative methods is greatly improved by using a combination of research methods, a process known as methodological triangulation.

SA: This paragraph address the reviewer point clearly, but is not included in the revised manuscript, needs to be added.

Response:

We are sorry that we failed to include this paragraph as indicated in our first review, we have included this information in the revised manuscript in the methods and data collection section on page 6.

Selection of participants for each strategy (SSI and FGD) was conveniently based selection and has been described in the study design and sampling section.
SA: need to clarify how each group was select conveniently e.g. how they were invited? Where? When? Approximate refusal rate in each group?...etc.

Response: For adult community members, a local community leader of each sub village (Butini, Bomani and Miyu) was asked to invite community members to participate in the study by blowing a whistle one day before the event, on the next day participants who responded to the call gathered in open grounds from which convenient sampling was used to select participants to be recruited in the study. For school children, using class teacher’s children from standard four to seven were conveniently selected and recruited in the study. The study objective was explained to participants and those who did not comply were excluded from the study. This has now been indicated in the methods section on page 5.

Comment no 5: Results

The results did not show data compatible with 171 individuals that were individually interviewed or participated on the FGD. In the paper the authors showed only data from parents and school children. What about other community members? It would be nicer if the authors showed the differences and similarities of the two groups interviewed: parents and children. A similarity analysis would make the paper significantly more interesting and also could add information obtained in the study.

SA: reviewer comment is effectively addressed in the table, suggest to add the demographic information stated as text in the first paragraph of the results to the beginning of that table

Response: We acknowledge the reviewers observation, we have included the demographic information of the participants at the beginning of Table 3 shown in the results section.

Comment 7: References: High number of references with 10 years or more.

SA: Still many references are 10 years or more including references No.: 3, 7, 9, 14, 18, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 38, 41, 42, 45, 47, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 60.

Response: as requested we have included more recent references, however we are of the belief that some of the old references are still valid in relation to our study and are retained.
Reviewer reports:

Reviewer 2 (Reviewer 2): REVISION ASSESSMENT FROM THE ACADEMIC PEER REVIEWER:

Has the author addressed your concerns sufficiently for you to now recommend the work as a technically sound contribution?

Yes

Reviewer comments: The authors need to state explicitly in methodology that "this work was designed to complement quantitative findings of a larger parasitological and malacological study conducted in the same area". If the larger study has been published then we need to know. Author should support the results of SSI shown in table 3 with statistical analysis using chi square analysis

Response:

We thank the reviewer for this observation. We have now clearly stated in the methodology (page 5) that this study was designed to complement quantitative findings of a large parasitological and malacological study conducted in the same area which has been published in the journal of Parasites and vectors August (2018) 11:481-9. As a qualitative study it was not designed to be powered for quantitative analysis.

The calculate percentages of SSI results in Table 3 were conducted to indicate salient perceptions amongst the groups rather than to find significant differences between them. We therefore believe that including chi-squared statistical analysis is not appropriate, and request that this is not included in the manuscript.