Author’s response to reviews

Title: What is in the drug packet? Access and use of non-prescribed poly-pharmaceutical packs (Yaa Chud) in the community in Thailand

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Responses to Reviewers’ Comments

Reviewer 1: Zsolt Demetrovics

I have few comments that might improve the manuscript.

- Thank you very much for your valuable comments.

1.1 The concept of self-medication needs further clarification. Self-medication may include many different activities, including the use of illegal substances, use of legal substances without prescription, use of non-pharmaceutical substances etc. It needs clarification (clear definition) what the authors exactly mean when using this term (page 2-3). In fact I'm not 100% sure that self-medication is the right term to be used here, as maybe a more specific term could help understanding.

A1.1. Agree with the comment.

Concept of self-medication is added into the first paragraph of the introduction (Line 37-38), while in the third paragraph the authors define the self-medication of this study as the use of Yaa Chud (Line 50-54).
1.2. In many of the above meanings, self-medication is not restricted to low- and middle-income countries as mentioned by the authors (page 3)

A1.2. Agree with the comment.

The authors have added more information about self-medication in the low and middle income countries “...widely use but more prevalent in low- and middle-income countries” and have provided a citation in the first sentence of the second paragraph (Line 43).

1.3. The Introduction a bit too lengthy and losing focus at some points. I think it should be more focused on exactly what the authors have examined in their study.

A1.3. Agree with the comment.

The authors have shortened the introduction by putting health service delivery system and policy to control as additional files 4 and 5. In addition, the authors have restructured the introduction.

1.4. The second last paragraph of the Introduction should be placed somewhere in the beginning of the manuscript not right before the Methods section. Furthermore, I'd suggest to place the aims at the very end of the Introduction (just before the Methods section).

A1.4. Agree with the comment.

Since the authors have shortened and re-structured the introduction, we already place the aims of the study at the end of the introduction (Line 101-105). However it is before the conceptual framework.

1.5. I'd suggest to try to re-organize the findings of the study. The presentation is generally interesting, however, quite fragmented with short statement and a lot of short quotes. I’d try to summarize the key findings on a more structured way and underlying them with some (maybe fewer) quotes.

A1.5. Agree with the comment.

The authors have re-organized the results by using the themes based on the conceptual framework and by using the most relevant quotes (As highlighted in the results section, Line 235-435).
Reviewer 2: Matthew Kelly

This is a very interesting paper addressing an important topic in Thailand, access to non-prescribed medications by non-trained community members. The paper is clear and well argued. I like the use of the conceptual framework and it helped in interpreting the findings. I have a few comments that should be addressed by the authors:

Thank you very much for your positive and valuable comments.

2.1. The term self-medication is not defined in sufficient detail. Self-medication can cover a large range of practices including use of non-prescribed pharmaceuticals, to the use of alternative medicines to the use of illicit drugs. The authors need to make clear exactly what they are including in their definition, or use a different term.

A2.1. Agree with the comment.

The concept of self-medication is added into the first paragraph of the introduction (Line 37-38), while in the third paragraph the authors define the self-medication of this study as the use of Yaa Chud (Line 50-54).

Please also see our response to reviewer 1.

2.2. Where Thai language terms are used, and if the journal format permits, they should also be defined in Thai script. This will make definitions clearer for the audience of Thai people. Examples include yaa chud itself, as well as yaa antarai and so on.

A 2.2. There is no mention about this in the journal instructions, so we have put the Thai script into the menu script (Line 50 and 76-77).

2.3. In lines 75-77 the authors describe a list of factors related to self-medication. But we are left to guess at how these factors interact with self-medication, i.e do some of these factors encourage more medication, do some of them encourage less self-medication. The authors just provide a list of factors.

A2.3. Agree with the comment.

The authors have added more details of the mechanisms associated with each factor into paragraph 6 of the introduction (Line 89-97).
2.4. The participants in the study are described well, but their actual recruitment isn't. Particularly for the community members, how were they approached and asked to be part of the study? What information on confidentiality and so on were they given before agreeing to participate? Did researchers call them and ask for participation by phone? This also applies to the grocery store owners. I imagine it may be quite a sensitive topic to ask to interview people about provision of non-legal medications. How was this handled?

A2.4. Agree with the comment.

The authors have provided more detailed information in the text (Line 173-176) and (Line 190-193).

To recruit the participants for FGDs, the researcher used a similar method as recruiting community members to participate in IDIs (Line 198-199).

2.5. In the conceptual framework the delineation of the different factor levels moving across the framework is good. But I think it is pre-judging the results of the research to put being elderly or a migrant worker as a pre-disposing factor. These are research results, not pre-defined pre-disposing factors. Examples of demographic characteristics could be provided but left undefined. So you could have age as a demographic factor without saying elderly.

A2.5. Agree with the comment.

The authors have dropped “being elderly and migrant” to make it consistent with other factor (as shown in Figure 2)