Author's response to reviews

Title: Women's experiences seeking informal sector abortion services in Cape Town, South Africa: a descriptive study

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To Reviewers and Editor:

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our manuscript. We have provided point-by-point responses below.

Kirsten Black (Reviewer 1): The consistency of message is much better but still not right. Eg in the abstract results you say that women are having unsafe abortions at high rates. This study did not set out to do this. Further the mention of new sampling strategies is odd as not mentioned in the methods. Finally the key findings highlighted in the first part of the discussion is different to the key findings in the abstract. There have been improvements with respect the discussion on sex workers and marginalisation.

Thank you Kirsten Black for your review and for your comments. We have made a couple of minor corrections to the abstract, which help to improve the message. We have removed “at high rates” from the conclusions of the abstract (page 3). This helps to focus the sentence on the reasons why women in Cape Town are attempting informal sector abortion (at all), which is one of our study aims. We also revised the methods of the abstract by replacing “snowball sampling” with “a specific variation of snowball sampling called respondent driven sampling (RDS), new to the field of abortion research” (page 2). This better identifies the method we used and also introduces RDS explaining that it is a new method for abortion. With regard to the key findings, we have added a sentence to the abstract to include that some reasons women sought informal sector abortion also included that they did not know where to seek legal abortion services and
that they believed it would be more expensive. We also added the word “privacy” in front of “mistreatment and stigma” to the discussion section findings (page 3).

Louise KEOGH (Reviewer 2): The paper now reads as a much more coherent piece of work, and clearly makes an important contribution to the literature. I recommend publication, subject to better formatting of the tables, and addressing minor typos.

Thank you Louise Keogh for your review and thoughtful comments. We have moved all tables that are less than one A4 or letter page up in to the text where they belong (all tables but table 4). We have also removed the extra cells in table 3. We have followed the instructions on formatting for the manuscript and completed a careful review of the entire manuscript to correct minor typos.

Sincerely,

Sarah Raifman and authorship team