Author’s response to reviews

Title: DOUCHING PRACTICES AMONG WOMEN IN THE BOLGATANGA MUNICIPALITY OF THE UPPER EAST REGION OF GHANA

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RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

We will like to thank the editor and the reviewers for taking time to review our manuscript the second time. We are also grateful for the wonderful comments. Please find below our response to the comments and how they were addressed in the manuscript.

Omar Shaaban (Reviewer 1):

The authors reporting a cross-sectional study on the prevalence of VD in their region

The message is not new

Response: Although the message may not be new but it contains information that is relevant for the formulation of intervention on health information for this populations. This findings can also be use in other low income settings similar to the study area.

Sample size shroud be calculated on population base and in a representative sample not on previous study

Response: We are very grateful for your comments. This will be helpful in our future studies. However, the sample could not be calculated on a population base because we could not find data on the actual estimated population for the target study population.
Emmanuel Ajuluchukwu Ugwa (Reviewer 2):

Thank you for addressing the comments. Please also address some new concerns as stated:

Please reference the previous study where your prevalence was derived from. Your reference 21 is not properly cited.

Response: This was done accordingly in the manuscript and is now as follows, Rose, S., Spinks, N., Canhoto, A. I. (2014). Management Research; Applying the principles. London: Routledge.

Preferably use a regional study.

Response: Our search for a regional study did not yield any results. Hence we relied on this particular study.

Also n=227, what about attrition and non-response. You should have added 10-20% to address possible attrition.

Response: This was already stated in the manuscript under results “A total of 250 questionnaires were administered to participants. However, 236 questionnaires were returned in which 36 were incomplete resulting in a response rate of 80%”.

Non use of correlation analysis is a serious limitation of this study and should be included in the limitation section.

Response: Thank you for that observation.

The P-value was 0.041, at p<0.05 significance level, your p-value is significant, hence showed association between douching and religion.

Response: We are very sorry for the wrong figure quoted in the response to the previous comment on this study. The figure is rather 0.562 and not 0.041 as previously stated.

Revise the English language again

Response: This was done as suggested. The manuscript was given to an English person for proof reading.
Margaret P. Kasaro (Reviewer 4):

Thank you for consideration of comments and the review on the manuscript so far. I have a few comments some maybe discretionary others may be necessary to include. You may also need to have that English review to ensure that small mistakes which may compromised the language of the paper are corrected.

Abstract:

I believe the objective of the study is to provide data in the area of vaginal hygiene practices in Bolgatanga Municipality(GHANA) as there is currently not much research done in this subject area. The rationale is that health behaviors are different and are influenced by culture and geography and therefore the need to do this research in this location. This must be well crafted in your abstract and introduction so that it is clear why this particular research has been done. If you agree, this is my suggested wording for the abstract:

Vaginal douching is a common practice among women all over the world. Women douche for various reasons, despite evidence indicating the harmful health effects of the practice. There is lack of data on the practice in Ghana but health behaviors like vaginal douching may be influenced by differences in culture and geography. Therefore this study sought to assess prevalence and predictors of vaginal douching practices among women of the Bolgatanga municipality of Ghana.

For the sentence in the methods there is no need to repeat this - Two hundred participants were included into the study since you have already mentioned the number of women included.

For the conclusion you can use the same wording from the main conclusion

Response: This is revised as suggested in the manuscript

Background

Line 34 Instead of saying "In sub-Saharan Africa, products such as herbs, chemicals, powder and papers are used by women for douching" you can say "In sub-Saharan Africa ....... and papers are among substances inserted into the vagina" This is because the list you provide includes more than fluids, and that is now describing vaginal practices in general and not just douching

Line 39 to 41 suggested edit to be definite with effect - Most of these products are found to be hazardous to women's health by causing irritation to the vaginal mucosa.
Water is the most commonly used product for the practice in Ghana. And then combine it with paragraph starting at line 47 as this is discussing water for douching and its negative impact. Suggestion to however to leave out the example of dental effect.

This study was conducted in the Bolgatanga Municipality to estimate the prevalence and assess predictors of vaginal douching practices among women in the Municipality.

Response: This is corrected as suggested.

Some comments on the ethics section:

This comment on document translation doesn't need action but it is important to have translation done before data collection otherwise quality of data maybe compromised by differences of on spot translation.

What the consent verbal only? Is it a requirement to put in the separate components of the informed consent as we know this is what you obtained/information gave out in the informed consent process.

Response: Thank you for this very important observation. This is well noted for our future studies.