Author’s response to reviews

Title: "The sun keeps rising but darkness surrounds us": a qualitative exploration of the lived experiences of women with obstetric fistula in Ethiopia

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Response for Reviewer

Authors want to express heart full acknowledgement for the reviewer. All the comments and suggestions are highly important for improving the manuscript.

Here are the reviewer’s comments and authors’ response

Solina Richter (Reviewer)

Please attend to the following:

1. Page 3 Line 17 - 18: change '97% had mental health problems' to '97% developed mental health problems'.

   Response: - Thank you we revised accordingly. It highlighted by green color.

2. Page 3 Line 31 - 32: Change '… visits for their pregnancy' to 'visits during their pregnancy'.

   Response: - Thank you we revised accordingly. It highlighted by green color.
3. Page 3 Line 35 - 36: You talk about skilled assistant. I suggest that you are more precise. Are you talking about 'skilled birth attendants'?

Response: - Thank you. It was to talk about skilled birth attendant. It highlighted by green color.

4. Page 3 line 46- 47. I am not sure if I agree with this statement. Most of t researches on obstetrical fistula (OF) particularly focus on experiences if living with this condition. Maybe in Ethiopia there is not much known. I still need a stronger motivation what this research will contribute to new knowledge related to OF.

Response: - Thank you. The paragraph i.e. lacks of qualitative data as one motives for conducting the research. Besides that, among the ten regional state of Ethiopia, Amhara regional state is known by the highest prevalence of Obstetric Fistula patients (EDHS, 2016). Most of the patients are socially excluded and victimized. Consequently, this research amid to explore and avail data on the lived experience of fistula patient for the region as well as for scientific world.

5. Page 3 Line 52: would like a better description between the association between home delivery and early marriage and the delivery of obstetrical fistula.

Response: - Thank you....................... It highlighted by green color.

6. Page 4 Line 8: What is the research question?

Response: Thank you! The authors aimed to say the “objective of the research”. This explained on page 4. Line 10-11 “to explore the life experience of women with obstetric fistula at Bahir Dar Hamlin Fistula Centre in Bahir Dar, Amhara Regional State”.

7. Page 4 line 21: remove 'on'.


Response: Thank you, we revised accordingly.

8. Page 4 Line 24 - 25. The sentence, 'The researchers approached bracketing through.' Is not a complete sentence.

Response: Thank you. We revised accordingly. It is highlighted by green color.

9. Page 4 Line 25 - 26. The sentence, 'The current research reported the experience of fistula "what" and how they become a fistula victim "How it experienced'. The sentence construction needs some editing.

Response: Thank you. We revised accordingly. It is highlighted by green color.

10. Page 4 Line 48. I suggest that you remove the three words, 'and provides surgery'.

Response: Thank you. We accepted the comment.

11. Page 5 Line 19 - 20. Were ten participants selected or recruited? Were 10 selected/recruited or was this sample sufficient to give you an in-depth understanding of the phenomena?

Response: Thank you. We selected ten study participants. The sample size was limited by information saturation. We highlighted this information on the manuscript on page 5. (New participants were approached until data saturation had been reached (that is, until no new ideas were obtained).

12. Page 5 Line 20 - 33. Add 'a between in and convenient. The place cannot keep confidentiality. The place ensures privacy and can contribute to confidentiality. Please change the sentence.
Response: Thank you. We accepted the comment. It is highlighted by green color.

13. Page 5 Line 47 - 48. Delete the words 'through the interview'.

Response: Thank you. We accepted the comment.

14. Page 6 Line 10. Was the transcript translated to English and how was the translation quality addressed? I suggest that you add information on the backward and forward translation and who was involved in this process?

Response: Thank you. We add information accordingly. It is highlighted by green light on page six.

The interview was conducted by Amharic language. The transcripts also write up by Amharic language to keep the quality of the data. At last, all transcripts were translated to English language by the three researchers (MA, LA, ZB) who are fluent speakers of Amharic and English language. Finally, the English Version of all transcripts reviewed by foreigner (NB, see acknowledgement part) who is fluent speaker of English Language.

15. Page 6 Line 19. You stated that, "Discrepancies on the application of code guide were reviewed and resolved. This exercise ensured that the coders had a common understanding of the code guide and its applications'. How was this resolved? Sentence structure needs revision.

Response: Thank you. We showed the process on page 6 by highlighting green color. We also restructure sentence.

16. Page 6 Line 43 - 44. You stated that, ' before transitioning to the next theme or statement on the study guide, the interviewer read back the summary.........' . It was not a study guide but rather and interview guide and wonder how this was possible as the interviews was not yet transcribed at this stage.

Response: Thank you. We accept the comment about “study guide” which now replaced by “interview guide”. Concerning summery issues, the concept presented on the manuscript is to tell the reader about how the interviewer presented the question to the study participants. The
interviewer summarized the question and the probes to the respondents which enable us to not miss some important probing and questions and to get detailed information from the participants. We reviewed it accordingly.

17. Page 6 Line 58. Change to: An independent researcher who was not part of the study……..

Response: Thank you. We accepted the comment.

18. Page 7 Line 23- 24: Change 'had had' to ' who had developed (or experienced)'.

Response: Thank you. We accepted the comment. It is highlighted by green color.

19. Page 8 Line 51 - 58. This statement need a reference otherwise it reads like an assumption.

Response: Thank you. It is unusual to mention references on the result section. However, the comment forwarded by the reviewer is valid and we revised the statement. Actually, the idea was come from field note. Some mothers feel that rural women are not respected and equally treated as urban women

20. Page 18 Line 46. Change 'Fistula' to 'obstetrical Fistula'.

Response: Thank you. We accepted the comment. It is highlighted by green color.

21. Page 18 Line 51 - 53. You stated that 'the finding has positive implications for health care service utilization and for discouraging early marriage practice'. This is a very vague statement and I suggest that you expand on this statement. I agree but need to know more about the 'how'.

Response: Thank you. We accepted the comment and we added some statement to explain the issue. It is highlighted by green color.
22. Page 20 Lines 15 - 25. What about educating the family and community about the causes of OF and the treatment options. Can you suggest any further research generated by your findings?

Response: Thank you. We stated the implication research at the end conclusion on page 21. We highlighted by green color.

23. There are is still many grammatical and editorial changes needed.

Response: Thank you. We did copy editing by fluent English speaker (Nicole Burgen from University of Ottawa).