Author’s response to reviews

Title: The effects of occupational pollutants on the reproductive health of female informal street traders in Warwick Junction, Durban, South Africa – a cross-sectional study

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Technical Comments:

The reviewer acknowledges changes and improvements made by the authors, however few minor concerns still remains.

1) In methods, the author should describe how the they deal with privacy and private information acquired from the patient when fulfilling the questionnaire, if any.
Page 6 (Methods) L33-38 : this comment above has been addressed, making mention of the actions taken regarding information gathered during interviews. Handling of data was according to Ethics approval.

2) Discussion section should be deepened. A brief review of available literature, starting from the studies the reviewer listed in the previous peer-review round, should be done.

The above comments have been addressed as adequate as possible following review of relevant literature. The article by Wylie et al was referenced within the Discussion section. The description of pollutants was adequately addressed bearing in mind the limitations of the study as addressed within the article. The above articles looked at specific pollutants, for example BPA in peritoneal fluids of patients and endometriosis as an outcome. In the Warwick study, although plastic components were found to be burned as an alternate fuel source this was a small percentage (5%) as noted in the article. However due to the movement of traders the implicit personal sampling of exposures is a challenge. As mentioned in the article we were limited by the extent of exposure assessments that could be performed by both budget constraints and the nature of the sample (informal traders). The follow – up research of this study is to conduct in-depth personal and passive sampling throughout the trading hub to better characterise exposures.