Author’s response to reviews

Title: A Qualitative Study on Reasons for Early Removal of Implanon among Users in Arba Minch Town, Gamo Goffa Zone, South Ethiopia: A Phenomenological Approach

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Editors comments:

1. In the discussion, please underline the importance of the issue that women in developing countries often do not have a say and control on their own reproductive life. This is a key element that must be addressed. Please include a paragraph about how to address this issue and if the government is doing anything is this regard.

   • Thank you. Accepted and corrected.

2. Please format the declarations section (please include the declarations title) according to the journal guidelines:
   • Accepted.

Reviewer 2 comments:

1. Beyond the definition, reasons for choosing phenomenal approach and steps taken in its application in the conduct of this study have not been stated.
   • Thank you. Accepted and corrected.

2. Information on duration of implanon use is fundamental information required in the inclusion/exclusion criteria or presentation of the profile of participants of this study that set to determine clear understanding of reasons for unusual early discontinuation of implanon.
   • Accepted.

3. Stating "purposive and convenience" selection of participants without further explanations do not provide clarity about the few implanon users whose experiences the study seeks to explore.
   • Accepted and corrected.
4. Page 5 line 37 -47 is still unclear. In family planning practice long-term reversible (IUD and subdermal implants) methods usually used for birth spacing should not be lumped up with permanent methods (male and female sterilization) that are used for birth limiting.
   • Corrected.

5. The study revealed well known reasons for implant discontinuation. These include side effects, desire for more children, male partner opposition, 'method failure' and informed decision making process. However in-depth exploration of these reasons, a primary objective of the study has not been done.
   • Though the study revealed the known reasons for implanon discontinuation, it was not documented in our study area.
   • The results were what we explored from our particular study in our particular setting.

6. Furthermore irregular menstrual bleeding, the leading reason for discontinuation of sub-dermal implants has been well documented in many settings including Ethiopia. In practice implanon causes scanty and irregular menses. Thus, indicating that most users discontinued the method for perceived or observed heavy menstrual bleeding requires further exploration to have a clear understanding of this important concern of the local users of the method.
   • Yes, it needs further exploration. Thus, we are planning to have another study with extensive exploratory approach.

7. Similarly, desire for more children, male partner opposition. Specifically what really constitutes male opposition?
   • Yes, it has to be explored in other studies with the objective of what really constitutes male opposition.

8. Also, implanon is one of the most effective contraceptives. Hence, experiencing 'method failure' require further interrogation. While on implanon have any of the participants experienced unintended pregnancy? What really happened? Regarding HEWs who reported attending to clients with method 'failure', what really were the associated factors?
   • Yes, it needs further investigation. However, to examine method failure requires some other advanced research procedures / techniques in addition to interviewing.
     • In this study, it was the HEWs who reported method failure as one of the reasons for removal of implanon. They reported that there were women who got pregnant while using implanon. It might be related to the contraceptive itself (potency affected by many factors like expiration date, storage facility, etc.) and the technical competency of the health professionals involved in the insertion process, etc. Therefore, the clients and the HEWs can’t tell us exactly what the reasons are. It rather needs other mixed study methods to examine it.

9. Making voluntary informed choice and form of counseling provided require exploration
   • Based on the report of the HEWs, it has been discovered that there was a problem in the area of making voluntary informed choice and in the form of counseling provided. Since these problems are related to the health professionals (who are not our study participants) involved in the process of implanon provision at the nearby health facilities, it requires other study that will address them.
10. In conclusion, the study has not adequately addressed the set objective
   • Our main objective was to explore the main reasons for early removal of implanon particularly in our study area, Arba Minch town. Therefore, we have identified them, thus we have achieved the objectives. However, it doesn’t mean that
     the whole thing has been covered in our study. So, we too recommend further large studies with mixed methods in
     order to better understand factors or reasons associated early removal of implanon.

   • Once more thank you for your great contribution.