Author's response to reviews

Title: Adapting ethical guidelines for adolescent health research to street-connected children and youth in low- and middle-income countries: A case study from western Kenya

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Author's response to reviews: see over
**Dear Editor,**

We are writing this letter to address the comments concerning the submitted manuscript: ‘Adapting ethical guidelines for adolescent health research with street-connected children and youth in low- and middle-income countries: A case study from western Kenya’. We would like to thank the Reviewers for their valuable comments. This letter addresses the comments numerically point by point to accompany the attached revised manuscript. The comments of the reviewers are italicized followed by the corresponding response from the authors.

1. *Clarify in the Methods if consent to take part in the survey was given and how it was obtained. Please also clarify if the ethics committees approved the consent procedure.*

We have now included the following text regarding consent procedures for the three studies in the methods section:

**Study 1:** All ethics committees approved the consent procedures. Approval for the study was also provided by the District Children’s Officer (DCO), and we obtained a waiver of individual guardian consent because as per human subjects regulations, the study was minimal risk, the study could not have been practically carried out without the waiver, and because the waiver did not adversely alter the risk-benefit ratio for participants. All prospective participants underwent a comprehension assessment to ensure the SCCY understood the nature of their participation in a research study, the study procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time or withhold any answers. Individual written assent was obtained from each participant. Assent was obtained by a social worker trained in assenting vulnerable populations (especially children). Children requesting or requiring healthcare but who were not eligible to participate in the study or who refused to provide assent were provided with healthcare services without enrolment into the study.

**Study 2:** All ethics committees approved the consent procedures. Approval for the study was also obtained from the DCO in Eldoret. All prospective participants underwent a comprehension assessment to ensure the SCCY understood the nature of their participation in a research study, the study procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time or withhold any answers. Those prospective participants passing this screening phase were enrolled; those over 18 provided informed consent. Those under 18 provided assent in the presence of a child advocate. There were two prospective participants who failed to meet the criteria for understanding and were not enrolled. None refused participation in the study.
Study 3: All ethics committees approved the consent procedures. Approval for the study was also obtained from the DCO in Eldoret. All prospective participants underwent a comprehension assessment to ensure the SCCY understood the nature of their participation in a research study, the study procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time or withhold any answers. Informed consent was provided by the DCO for SCCY. Individual written assent was provided by SCCY. Fingerprints were used for SCCY unable to sign or write their name.

2. Include a Abbreviation section.

We have now included the following list of Abbreviations section:

Abbreviations:
LMIC: Low- and middle-income countries  
SCCY: Street-connected children and youth  
ERIC Project: Ethical Research Involving Children project  
UG: Uasin Gishu  
MU: Moi University  
MTRH: Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital  
AMPATH: Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare  
FGD: focus group discussions  
IU: Indiana University  
IRB: Institutional Review Board  
IREC: Institutional Research Ethics Committee  
CBOs: community-based organizations  
DCO: District Children’s Officer

3. Include details of any funding in the Acknowledgement.

We have now included the funding details in the following Acknowledgement:

Acknowledgement: We would like to acknowledge the street children and youth in Eldoret and their on-going struggle on the streets and thank them for their on-going support and participation in our research activities. We wish to gratefully acknowledge the Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, and Village Elders of the Locations of Pioneer, Kapsoya, Koisagat, Ol’Lenguse, Olare, Tarakwa, Kipsinende and Kapyemit for their support and leadership. We also wish to acknowledge all the residents of these Locations and particularly the many households caring for vulnerable members of their community, notably orphaned and separated children. We particularly want to acknowledge the County and District Children’s Officers, particularly Mr. Philip Nzenge, for their dedication to protecting the children of Uasin Gishu County. We would also like to acknowledge the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital for their contribution and on-going support of street children in western Kenya. This work was supported by Award Number R01HD060478 from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development or the National Institutes of Health.
4. Remove the figure legend from the figure file and include it in the main manuscript after the References.

We have removed the figure legend from the figure file and included it in the main manuscript after the references.

5. Remove additional copy of the manuscript from the additional files.

We have removed the additional copy of the manuscript from additional files.

We hope we have adequately addressed your comments regarding this manuscript. We welcome additional comments and criticism that will assist us in disseminating this important information.

Sincerely,

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