Author’s response to reviews

Title: Ethical issues associated with HIV molecular epidemiology: A qualitative exploratory study using inductive analytic approaches

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Author’s response to reviews:

1. Ethics approval and consent to participate

As we note the consent to participate was given verbally rather than in written format, please provide a reason why verbal consent to participate was used and clarify if this was approved by the local ethics committee within this section.

Response

Thank you for your comments. We have inserted the following text on page 7, line 11 to 18 in response to your query:

“Verbal consent was requested instead of written consent because of practical challenges associated with obtaining written consent from participants remotely (participants were from different parts of the world). This was explained in the protocol, which was approved by the Biomedical Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (Ref BE224/16). The participants were also not a vulnerable population and the study questions were entirely scholarly and required no disclosure of personally sensitive information or any other information that could identify the participants”

2. Section headings

Please rename the section heading ‘Findings’ to ‘Results’ in the main text of this manuscript.

Response

Thank you for the comment. We have renamed the section heading as recommended.
3. Title page

Please add the title page to the main manuscript document (rather than as a separate file).

Response

We have added the title page to the main document as advised. Thank you.

4. Clean copy

On uploading your revisions, please remove any tracked changes or highlighting and include only a single clean copy of the manuscript.

Response

A clean copy of the revised manuscript has been included, thank you.