Author’s response to reviews

Title: Factors influencing the decision that women make on their mode of delivery: the Health Belief Model.

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Version: 3
Date: 3 February 2015

Author’s response to reviews: see over
Response letter to reviewers’ comments on:

MS: 6492693471363851
Factors influencing the decision that women make on their mode of delivery:
the Health Belief Model.

Dear Dr. Morrey,

Thank you very much for the valuable comments. We have made amendments to the manuscript according to the reviewers’ comments, and highlighted in red for your easy reference.

We have addressed the reviewers’ comments point-by-point as listed below:

Response to Reviewer # 1’s comments:

Major compulsory revisions:

1. The most important question is relation between the possibility of CDMR and the study sampling. In the 158-159 lines the authors declared that the CDMR is only permitted in private hospitals, but in the methods (line 207-210) they did not clarified whether the research carried out only in public hospitals or both public and private hospitals. Also regarding to this issue if only public hospitals participated in the study, it may causes bias, because the women who would like to have CD and can effort it, choose private hospitals. This topic also mentioned in the line 328. It has to be clarified!

Response: Sorry for the confusion. Women of this study were recruited from outside the hospitals or Maternal and Child Health Centers. It is not unusual for women who also utilize both public and private health services regardless of their financial ability in Hong Kong. Most important of all, the women were asked to indicate their preference of CD or VD without financial and medical considerations (the first sentence under the section under ‘Factors Influencing Mode of Delivery’, and were asked to indicate their perceptions relating to VB or CD.

Two statements are now added to make this clearer in the manuscript: (1) under ‘Questionnaire’ Part B to state clearly that women were to make their choices “without the constraints of financial and medical implications”, (2) study results: Characteristics of the study participants, 2nd paragraph.

Minor essential revisions

2. Why did you included only married women? Why the pregnant women who are not married are excluded?

Response: First of all, there is a very small percentage of single pregnant women in Hong Kong (3.7% in 2001, Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong 2006). Second, it is not the intention of this study to explore or compare the differences in the preference of
3. In the line 203. can be read about the inclusion: "pregnant or had given birth within the past three years. " Could you provide the distribution of women according to being before or after delivery?

Response: A total of 66.7% of women were pregnant and 33.3% had given birth within the past three years. This result is now added to the report under Characteristic of the Study Participants.

4. In the line 214-215 we can read about the determination of sample size. Could you provide any literature on this issue?

Response: thanks for pointing out the missing reference. The reference is now added to where appropriated and in the reference list.

Discretionary Revisions
5. The introduction part is too excessive.

Response: sorry for being excessive. The introduction tried to cover the prevalence of different mode of deliveries, factors influencing preference, and the application of the Health belief model on maternal choice.

6. How many women were excluded from the study and why (line 153)? In a country, where the CDMR is not permitted, it can be important information.

Response: Among the total of 340 women approached, 326 completed the questionnaires, given a response rate of 95.9% (the first paragraph under Study Result). The refusal rate was 4.1%.

7. Did you do any analysis about the difference between women's attitude before and after delivery?

Response: As this is a cross-sectional study to examine the perception and attitude but not to examine the changes of women’s preference for mode of delivery. This analysis was not and cannot be done. However, the reviewer had pointed out an important question related to this topic. This implication for further study is now added under ‘Conclusion and Implications’. Thanks for this good suggestion.

Response to Reviewer # 2’s comments:

Discretionary Revisions
1. Methods seem appropriate. Some concerns are: that it is not clear whether part C of the questionnaire refers to VB and part D to CD, or if there are no differences, and so why there are 2 different parts.

Response: Part C focused on VB and Part D focused on CD. The statements related to the Perceived susceptibility, benefits, severity and barriers, and cues to action for the two
modes of delivery are different (see items in Table 3 and 4- which correspond to the items contained in Part C and D respectively).

Nevertheless, the related sentence under ‘Questionnaire development’ is revised to state clearly the differences for clarity. Thanks!

2. I would like to have a deeper description of the analysis of the factors performed and reliability. You did not mention the description of the statistical package used for determining the content validity. When assessing reliability you are only presenting one Cronbach’s alpha result. Considering that the instrument was conceived as multidimensional, (since you are assessing five domains of two different practices) shouldn’t you present as many Cronbach’s alpha result as domains you are exploring?

**Response:** The software used was the IBM SPSS Version 19.0 version (under Statistics Analysis. The full name of the statistical package is now stated in text. The reported Cronbach’s alpha value is an overall result of internal consistency testing. The author did not calculate five different Cronbach’s alpha for the five domains.

3. A suggestion would be to present the figures for the actual CD use in Asian countries in order to compare it with women preferences figures that you are presenting in your paper.

**Response:** The actual rates of CD in Asian countries were presented the 4th paragraph under ‘Introduction’. The author had compared the VB rates in Asia countries with women preferences figure presented in the paper (2nd paragraph under ‘Discussion’). Nevertheless, the rates of CD reported in Asia are now added to ‘Discussion’ to compare with the rate reported in this study.

4. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Limitations are not clearly stated but the manuscript flows logically and information is well posed.

**Response:** Thanks for the suggestion. A new paragraph on the ‘Limitations’ of this study is now added after “discussion”.

We hope we have revised the manuscript and answer your queries to your satisfaction. Looking forward to your favorable response.