**Author's response to reviews**

**Title:** Introducing Leprosy Post-Exposure Prophylaxis into the Health Systems of India, Nepal and Indonesia: A case study

**Authors:**

Anuj Tiwari (a.tiwari@erasusmc.nl)

Liesbeth Mieras (L.Mieras@Leprastichting.NL)

Krishna Dhakal (kpdhakal2001@gmail.com)

Mohammad Arif (cr@nlrindia.org)

Steaven Dandel (steaven_dandel74@yahoo.co.id)

Jan Hendrik Richardus (j.richardus@erasusmc.nl)

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Reply to the Comments

To,
The Editor
BMC Health Service Research

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Thanks for the email and encouraging news. Please find the below replies to the posted comments. I hope this will satisfy conditions for the publication of manuscript.

AR: Authors reply

Editor Comments:

1) Please move all Declarations to after the Conclusions section and above the References section.

AR1: All the Declarations are moved to the end and above the References section (page 14-16)

2) Ethics approval and consent to participate:
a) If you did not need formal ethics approval please confirm that this complies with national guidelines and provide a reference which supports this. Alternatively, supply a statement that says that a local ethics committee ruled that no formal ethics approval was required in this particular case.

AR 2.a: The previous statement on Ethics approval and consent to participate has been changed to

“This study was conducted under the LPEP program. The ethics approval for LPEP was obtained from the Institutional Human Ethics Committee, National Institute of Epidemiology, Indian Council of Medical Research (NIE/IHEC/201407-01) and Ethical Review Board, Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC 39/2015). There was no need for ethical clearance in Indonesia as post exposure prophylaxis was already a part of national leprosy control strategy. A verbal consent was sought from the respondents. No individual identifiable data were recorded”.

The copies of ethics approvals from India and Nepal can be made available. For Indonesia waiver, please refer attached published protocol of LPEP (http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/6/11/e013633; under heading ETHICS, page 6).

b) Please clarify whether consent was obtained from participants. If consent was not required, please provide details of why this was wavered and the institution/committee which approved this OR state any national guidelines which waiver the need for consent.

AR 2.b: The response is covered in AR2.a

3) Please change the title “Introduction” to "Background"

AR 3: Changed

4) Please change the title "Materials and methods" to "Methods"

AR 4: Changed

5) Conclusions

Could you please add a section "Conclusions" after section "Discussion". This should state clearly the main conclusions of the research article and give a clear explanation of their importance and relevance. You can use the last paragraph(s) of your Discussion if relevant.

AR 5: Conclusion section included at page 12-13 by using relevant last paragraphs of the previous discussion section. No new sentence/information is introduced.

6) Please move all Figure legends to the end of the main text.

AR 6: Figure legends placed at the end of main text and above List of Abbreviations.
7) Please note that if a questionnaire, survey and/or interview guide has been developed for the study, an English language version should be uploaded as a supplementary file and the text modified accordingly. If the questionnaire is standard, or has previously been published elsewhere, please provide the references or links to it.

AR 7: Included “Additional file 2: Staff Interview Questionnaire for Phase I and II”.

BMC Health Services Research operates a policy of open peer review, which means that you will be able to see the names of the reviewers who provided the reports via the online peer review system. We encourage you to also view the reports there, via the action links on the left-hand side of the page, to see the names of the reviewers.

Reviewer reports:

Victor Santana Santos (Reviewer 1): This study compared national leprosy control programs and adapted the Leprosy Post-Exposure Prophylaxis in India, Nepal and Indonesia. This is particularly of interest with regard to the potential to establish standard strategies for leprosy control programs. A large amount of effort has gone into collecting the data. Although the text is well written, some sentences could be strengthened by a grammatical review. I have minor concerns about the manuscript.

1) I am not sure on the waiving ethical approve as the authors conducted interviews.

AR1VSS: The comment is addressed in AR 2.a

2) The authors use 'etc' in some sentences of the article. I suggest editing these sentences and make it clear.

AR2VSS: Two times etc. was detected. ‘etc.’ on page 5 line 23 is replaced with ‘annual report’ and ‘etc.’ on page 6 is removed.

3) Page 8, line 3. […] a field visit in each country between April 2015 and January 2015. It seems that there was an error in the presentation of the data collection period.

AR3VSS: The error is now corrected as “April 2015 and January 2016” on page 6 line 3.

4) It was not clear whether the actions performed by the leprosy control programs are carried out throughout the country (for each country) or only in the regions identified as endemic areas.

AR4VSS: A sentence Included on page 7 line 17-19 “The leprosy control programs are operational throughout the countries, however, special attention is given to the high endemic areas.”
5) The discussion could be strengthened by a paragraph presenting the limitations of the study.

AR5VSS: Included a small paragraph on limitation on page 12 line 16-19.

MALCOLM DUTHIE (Reviewer 2): A well presented and important summary of early activities relating to the incorporation of PEP within leprosy control programs across 3 countries is provided.

Minor comment:

page 11, line 9 - reference to the earthquake in Nepal should be given more detail (i.e., date etc.), as this will make it more relevant to readers unaware of this event or when knowledge of it becomes diminished over time.

AR1MD: Included date of earthquake “25 April 2015” on page 9 line 5.