Author’s response to reviews

Title: "Ways and channels for voice regarding perceptions of maternal health care services within the communities of the Makamba and Kayanza provinces in the Republic of Burundi: An exploratory study"

Authors:

Prosper niyongabo (niyopro@yahoo.fr)

Renate Douwes (renate.douwes@hotmail.com)

Frederic Irambona (irambonafrdric@yahoo.fr)

Jimmy Mategeko (jimmy.mategeko@co.care.org)

Georges Nsengiyumva (georges.nsengiyumva@gmail.com)

Marjolein Dieleman (m.dieleman@kit.nl)

Tjard De Cock Buning (tjard.de.cockbuning@vu.nl)

Version: 4 Date: 03 Dec 2017

Author’s response to reviews:

NIYONGABO Prosper

Staff of The National Institute for Public Health

Of BURUNDI

PhD student at VU University of Amsterdam

To the Board of reviewers of the journal

“BMC Health Services Research ”

Subject: BHSR-D-16-00434R3 manuscript revision
Dear Sirs reviewers,

Thank you for the attention paid to our manuscript so far and for the comments made to get it improved. In this letter we show changes made to the previous manuscript. All comments made were in regard with the last page.

Reviewer 1

1. Text fragment to be revised

“It is found most of the time in situations when a health goal fixed by external actors like health professionals need the involvement of the community to get achieved. From what was stated above, Community participation appears as an umbrella term encompassing community empowerment and community mobilization.”

Revision made on the text above

“There has been an increasing recognition particularly in the health field that in order for interventions to be sustainable it is necessary to have community support [45;46 ]. For this reason, the interest in community participation has been increasing. The term "community participation" has been used as an umbrella term that includes community empowerment and community mobilization”

2. Text fragment to be revised

“Besides Community mobilization, community empowerment using PLA, can also be organized for community voice promotion. In fact, PLA are collaborative approaches to research that involves all relevant partners on an equal level of consideration [47 ]. They involve building trustful and respectful, honest and transparent facilitation through dialogue and discussions.”
Revised text

“In addition to community mobilization, community empowerment using Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is another approach that can contribute to the promotion of community voice. PLA focuses on building a partnership between all groups involved in a program to improve health by including intended beneficiaries in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the intervention [47]. Successful PLA depends on building trust and respect among all partners through a facilitated dialogue and discussions.”

Reviewer 2

1. Text fragment to be revised

"Nevertheless, the data show that barriers to community voice are independent of rural or urban locations, plain or mountain communities, more or less informed communities regarding health services (along trading routes and with access to facilities or not)"

Revision made

“The study has some limitations. Firstly, the absence of differences between the four health centers investigated in the study concerns barriers to community voice and not other aspects of the health system. The authors acknowledge that the four health centers may differ in other aspects. Moreover, although located differently within the province of Makamba and Kayanza, the four health centers are not representative of the whole provincial health system. It is interesting however to note that in our study, barriers to community voice are independent of rural or urban locations, plain or mountain communities, more or less informed communities regarding health services (along trading routes and with access to facilities or not). Nevertheless, this finding cannot be inferred to as no extensive context analysis was carried out beforehand.”
2. Reviewer’s comments

“…Second, I would stress the *cultural* difficulty of interviewing women. You seem to put the blame of women being shy and reluctant when there are complex cultural barriers to interviewing rural women with whom no rapport existed beforehand (especially in a culture when mean, rather than women, are in power).”

Revision made

“Secondly, researchers encountered difficulties related to interviewing women as they were shy and reluctant to express their views on maternal health services. This was mainly due to the facts that researchers were meeting these women for the first time and that women are not used to speak out on the behalf of the community as the Burundian culture and tradition takes this as men’s responsibility.

As a consequence, the study led to fewer results than expected for such an exploratory study. However, support for the relevance of their answers came from the contextual actors, husbands and the community key informants”.

Respectfully

Prosper NIYONGABO

The first author