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"

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Author’s response to reviews:

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To the Board of reviewers of the journal

“BMC Health Services Research ”

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

Thank you for receiving our revised manuscript version for publication. Queries have been raised by editorial reviewers regarding our previous manuscript and revision was requested to meet editorial requirements.

In this letter we show changes and adjustments made to address the raised queries.

Query number 1

‘Please provide clarification on why verbal consent was obtained, and not written consent. Please also provide clarification on whether obtaining only verbal consent was approved by the ethics committee.’

Revision made

Additional information regarding ethical approval was provided to the ‘Ethics and consent to participate’ section to clarify and elaborate on the reasons we have preferred verbal consent versus written consent and the ethical committee position on this issue. Now the section reads as follows:

“Ethics and consent to participate

Ethical approval was obtained from the Burundian national ethical committee. Interviews were conducted in an isolated and quiet place to ensure confidentiality. Anonymity was ensured by using codes instead of names of the people involved. Women were interviewed by female researchers. The women were informed about associations providing moral and psychological support if they had difficult or painful memories related to experiences with maternal health services. Informed verbal consent and agreement to record the interview were obtained from the participants before interviewing. The ethical committee had made obtaining the consent to participate orally or in a written form a mandatory ethical requirement for the study. Given the
high level of illiteracy within Burundian rural areas, researchers opted to seek for the verbal consent.

The participants were also informed about their right to stop the interview at any time.”

Query number 2

‘Please re-upload the figures, as they seem to be missing from your submission at the moment.’

Revision made

Figures and manuscript were uploaded separately and each figure was uploaded as a file.

Query number 3

‘Thank you for stating that data is available from a repository. Please provide more information on how to access this, e.g. a web link should be provided, or instructions on how to access the data.’

Revision made

Explanations on how to use open science framework were provided on the ‘Availability of study data and material’ section. The new section now reads as follows:

“Availability of study data and material

Data supporting study conclusions are made available using the Open Science Framework (OSF) Repository except interview guides which were provided as additional file to the main manuscript. To get access to data:
1. Go to the OSF website [Https://osf.io/]

2. Open an OSF account using one’s usual e-mail and a password.

3. Log in using the opened account to get access to the OSF dashboard.

4. On the dashboard, click on search to get access to the OSF search window

5. Type ‘interviews Makamba’ in the search window to access the OSF storage space where you can find interviews.

Query number 4

‘Please represent authors' names using their full initials, not their full name, in the Authors’ Contributions section. If there are any duplicated initials, please differentiate them to make it clear that the initials refer to separate authors’

Revision made

The new manuscript version represent authors’ name using full initials as requested. The section now reads as follows:

‘Author’s contribution

The corresponding author NP conceived the study protocol, including the study design, and developed tools for data collection. He led and directed the team in charge of data collection. He took the lead in writing the article by providing the first manuscript and by integrating corrections made by the co-authors to different versions.

RD participated in elaborating the protocol and data collection tools together with the corresponding author. She was a member of the data collection team and participated in
reporting and analyzing the results. She also participated in writing the article by providing feedback on all the versions of the manuscript.

NG revised the study protocol and data collection tools and participated in revising the manuscript of the article.

MD and TCB revised the protocol and data collection tools as senior researchers. They played a major role in revising the manuscript and have provided strong back-up in preparing the final version of the article.

MJ participated in planning the research and in revising the data collection tools. He also provided feedback on the manuscript.

IF participated in designing the study data collection. He participated actively in the manuscript revision and correction.

Query number 5

‘At this stage, please upload your manuscript as a single, final, clean version that does not contain any tracked changes, comments, highlights, strikethroughs or text in different colors. All relevant tables/figures/additional files should also be clean versions. Figures (and additional files) should remain uploaded as separate files.’

Response

We uploaded the manuscript, tables, figures as requested.
Regards

Prosper NIYONGABO,

The corresponding author