Author’s response to reviews

Title: A Harmful Traditional Practice Exposing Young Girls to Experience Virgin Pregnancy (Shilshalo): A Qualitative Study in Argoba Community, Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia

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Dear editor

First of all, we would like to thank for your relentless support in improving the quality of this manuscript. We have exerted our maximum effort to address all comments given by the reviewers and the editor too. The revisions we made are presented as follows;

Editor’s Comments

Reviewer 1, under Results section, Comment 1: Open sexual intercourse as consequences of the practice & Comment 3: Outcome of the virgin pregnancy.

Response: As per the reflection of the study participants, we added a statement that says open sexual intercourse is unlikely to happen because of shilshalo. And, the outcome of virgin pregnancy is already stated there (See the result section, line 80-85, page 9).

Reviewer 2, Comment 2: Community members opposing the practice & Comment 3: Polygamy and religious role in harmful traditional practices.

Response: we have already addressed the comment which is related to community members (see the result section, line 113-125, page 11 & line 178-188, page 13). Regarding to polygamy and
Comment: Since virgin pregnancy is the primary focus of the study, it will be useful to provide some information from the literature regarding its prevalence, risks and health and psychosocial consequences. The psychosocial consequences have been somewhat covered in the discussion section, but it will be useful to provide more details.

Response: As it is stated in the manuscript, it is really difficult to find previous research conducted on Shilshalo and virgin pregnancy. Because of this reason, it is a bit difficult for us to state about the prevalence of virgin pregnancy including other consequences resulted from it. The other thing that you should have to know is that the main focus of this study is shilshalo and virgin pregnancy is one of its consequences. Logically speaking, the study should have to show the prevalence of Shilshalo but as I stated earlier we could not do it because of lack of empirical studies.

Comment: English language editing is required as some typos can still be noticed in the manuscript.

Response: A great attempt has been made to correct typos.

Technical comment

Comment 1: Please remove the “Plain English Summary” from the manuscript.

Response: It has been already removed.

Comment 2: The interviews and descriptions of interviewees contain in the manuscript contain potentially identifying information. It is BioMed Central policy to not publish more than 2 indirect identifiers without explicit consent for publication from the participants. Currently, the age and gender information, in combination with other identifiers, may compromise patient/participant anonymity. Please amend the interviewee descriptions to address this issue, by removing this information or by providing ages as age-ranges.

Response: Revision was made based on your suggestion. (See for example the result section, line 4, page 6)
Comment 3, 4, 5 and 6

Response: All other technical comments have been addressed as per your advice.

Thank you once again for your valuable comments!

The Authors