Author’s response to reviews

Title: Human rights' interdependence and indivisibility: A glance over the human rights to water and sanitation

Authors:

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Mrs. Dabney P Evans, Editor of BMC International Health and Human Rights,

Please find below detailed responses explaining the modifications made to the article and clarifications of subjects mentioned in the editor’s and reviewers’ comments.

# Editor:

Comment 1: Please include a blank English language copy of your interview guide (if one was used) as an additional file.

Reply: The interview guide was translated and included, as asked, as an additional file.

Comment 2: Please ensure all section headings are as outlined in the submission guidelines, including the abstract, main text and declarations.

Reply: The sections headings were reviewed. We changed the headings of Methods, line 147; and References, line 452.
Reviewer #1 Audrey R Chapman

Comment 1: I think the revised version of your article is improved but it still does not compensate for your mail problem - the lack of sufficient data to do a more meaningful analysis. Your data analysis amounts to only two pages of your article.

Reply: We believed that the article has sufficient elements for the discussion proposed. The discussion section has almost 4 pages, not including the results section, which has, also, almost 4 pages. Therefore, we believe that the size, the quality and the approach of the data analysis is suitable.

Comment 2: I also think you may have misinterpreted what your respondents’ most fundamental problem is - homelessness - with the lack of access to adequate water and sanitation following from that their homelessness. I don't think that your data are rich enough to offer a basis to assess the interdependence and/or indivisibility of rights.

Reply: We understand the main point raised by the reviewer, but we believe that the data was well interpreted. We understand that, if the homeless have an opportunity to take a shower and to use clean cloths, they could feel less ashamed by their situation and will also be better accepted by the society. Access to water and sanitation is quite important for human dignity. If they have good access to those services they might not be treated as “garbage” or “trash” and, in fact, in some situations, people will not be able to know that they are homeless. Be seen as dirty and wearing dirty clothes gives more visibility to the homelessness situation, increasing discrimination and resulting in human rights violations. Therefore, the violation to the human rights to water and sanitation is related to violation of other rights, as discussed in the article.

Reviewer #3 Ilana Seff

Comment 1: The authors have separated the results and discussions sections- thank you. However, I might suggest adding a few additional lines of text summarizing each sub-section of results, rather than simply including participant quotes. Summarizing the themes emerging in each sub-section of quotes will help the reader understand the key takeaways and be better prepared to internalize the discussion section.
Reply: The suggestion made by the reviewer was accepted and few lines were added at each sub-section of the results. Line 238-240; line 250-254; line 258-261; line 279-284; line 285; line 294-297; and line 306-310.