Author’s response to reviews

Title: Coping with ill-health: Health care facility, chemist or medicinal plants? Health-seeking behaviour in a Kenyan wetland

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Author’s response to reviews:

Technical Comments:

1. Remove Figure titles from the actual Figure files.
   I am afraid I don’t understand this comment – please clarify what exactly you wish for us to do?

2. Please move the ‘Declarations’ ahead of the ‘References’.
   Sure, no problem.

3. Please re-order the manuscript file with the title page first, then abstract, then main text.
   Sure, no problem.

4. Written or Verbal Consent needs to be Stated in Ethics Approval Section.
   Thank you for this comment, the statement on the consent was already included in the respective section.

5. Administrative Permission for the Secondary data (mentioned on page 8) is required.
   This data was published elsewhere, we made sure to include the respective reference.

6. Please provide clarification on the Consent to Publish as you included images in Figure 7.
   Authors need to clearly state that they obtained written informed consent for the publication of these details must be obtained from that person. If not, they will need to revise the statement in the ‘Consent to Publish’ section and remove these images.
   We removed the images.

7. Please check and format the references according to the journal format (Should be Numbers)
   We revised the reference list and all references in the text.
8. In the Authors' contributions section, the individual contributions of each author should be specified. Please use initials to refer to each author's contribution in this section. Please make sure all authors qualify for authorship. Guidance and criteria for authorship can be found in our editorial policies at https://www.biomedcentral.com/getpublished/editorial-policies#authorship. Also within the same section, please confirm whether all authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Thank you very much for this comment, we have revised the section and added the missing information.

9. Have the authors obtained Copyright permissions for Figure 2?

Figure 2 is based on our own data, thus, no copyright permission is needed.

Dear Reviewer No 1,

Thank you very much for your time and effort to help us improve our manuscript. We greatly appreciate all of your comments, particularly on refining and adding more detail to the methods, incorporated them in the manuscript and respond point by point below.

The Authors.

1. Though overall the manuscript is well written, it is recommended that the authors review it for minor editorial corrections eg. line 36 the word "determinitive" needs to be replaced with "determining"

Thank you very much for this comment. We would, however, like to stick with the chosen word, because it well describes what we would like to say.

2. There is no mention in the Methods section as to when was this study undertaken

We moved the time frame from the cross-sectional survey section up to the methodological introduction in order to clarify for the reader that all data as collected from January to March 2015.

3. It is also relevant to mention as to who undertook the interviews and surveys for the study and what was the design of quality checks undertaken, if any.

Thank you very much for this comment. We included an additional paragraph in the data collection section that provides detail.

4. It would be desirable to mention the severity of the reported conditions in the syndromic surveillance since it would have a strong bearing on help seeking behaviour (HSB). While this aspect is discussed, definitive data on severity and its direct correlation with help seeking would be powerful data

Unfortunately, we can only hypothesize about the severity of symptoms, but have no detailed data beyond the presented that we could correlate. We made sure to clarify this in the text, and even in the heading, to not mislead the reader.

5. The methods also do not stratify the syndromic surveillance data according to age. It therefore makes it difficult to judge whether age of the patient was a modifier of HSB or effected the type of treatment sought eg. were children made to take more traditional medicines or allopathic ones.

Only the household heads / those interacting with the wetland water were interviewed, and they were all adults. We clarify this in the text.

6. The predominant locations of service sector workers needs to be mentioned in the text as well as in Fig 2.

More detail was added on how (much) the different user groups interacted with the wetland, and what their occupational routines looked like.

7. The manuscript could be bettered with some quotes (and perspectives) from the community health
workers since they work at a level where the rubber hits the road. Often their perspectives differ from those running health programmes.

Two quotes from community health workers are part of this manuscript, just as much as from any other healthcare provider – we did not add more quotes, in order to not increase the manuscript length even further.

8. In the Discussion, School Health Education maybe an important approach to highlight if appropriate in creating an intergenerational knowledge base that could impinge on optimizing HSB in the future. The grassroots cadres could help in achieving this. In this context, the current level of formal education in the study region could be described more explicitly. We included a table (3) displaying the characteristics of the study participants, and relate more to knowledge, education, and risk perception in the discussion.

9. In presentation, the tables need to be better spaced out and formatted. We believe that the editing will be done by the editorial office prior to publication.

10. Titles of figures 7, 8, 9, 10 definitively need to be improved eg. the expression of data as % needs to be mentioned in the Table. Additionally, the titles are all identical. The titles should contain the basis of characterising HSB viz. by symptoms (Table 7) by distinct target groups (Table 8)

Title of Table 9 is confusing. Do the authors mean to demonstrate the reasons for self care or no care based on the symptoms?

Similarly for Table 10, do the authors mean to demonstrate the reasons for self care or no care by the different occupational groups.

additionally, clear statement is required as to what proportion of persons did not seek any help at all (not even self care) for their conditions and what were the reasons for this.

We revised all tables, and the respective text as well.

Dear Reviewer No 2,

We made sure to address all of your comments and edited / rewrote parts of our manuscript based on your suggestions. We appreciate particularly the request to highlight the novelty of the paper, which we did. Thank you very much for your input.

The Authors.

General Comments:
This is an interesting manuscript and well-written. However, it is too long and can be made more concise. Some of the information in the introduction could be moved to the discussion. The tables could also be combined.
Thank you for this comment – we are aware this is a very long manuscript, mainly owed to the qualitative data and statements that were included. As you suggested, we combined parts of the discussion and introduction and shortened the manuscript where possible. We, however, added more text to the methods section.

The authors do not specify the novelty of the data or the methods. They need to state why their study is important and how does it add to the existing literature.
This was done in the last paragraph of the introduction section.
Specific Comments:

Methods:
Page 6, Line 148: Describe the sampling procedure briefly.
We added more detail and background on the study participants, the sampling, but also on the data collection and training of enumerators.

Data Analysis:
Did they adjust for the sampling design in the analysis?
We are not quite sure what this comment / feedback entails – would you mind specifying, please?

Results:
Page 10, Line 237: The numbers don't sync with what is shown in Figure 5. It might help to clarify them.
Thank you, we revised and corrected this based on your suggestion.

Discussion:
Page 19, Line 461: Correct the spelling of "efficacy".
Thanks, done.

Conclusion:
Page 24, Line 574: Remove "it" between "treatment" and "is".
Thanks, done.