Author’s response to reviews

Title: Disrespect and abuse of women during the process of childbirth at health facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Authors:

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Editor Comments:
1. There is a need to have a better written and more clear aim of the study at the end of the Background section. In the eligibility and exclusion criteria in the Methods section, did you use any limitation in the years of publication in the search strategy.
Author response: Dear editor accepted your comments and revision was made.

2. There is a need to have a thorough discussion of the findings, supported by more literature and references. Please also discuss the main limitations of the study, including the inclusion of only English language publications.
Author response: the comments were accepted and the correction was made

Reviewer 1:

Introduction
1. The author does a good job to describe different dimensions of mistreatment manifested in various studies conducted in SSA. However, he does not quantify the prevalence of various dimensions as found in the studies. The strength of the introduction and rationale of this analysis would benefit a lot by adding data on variations on prevalence found by difference studies.
Author response: Dear Reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

2. There is no clear objective of this analysis in the introduction section. It is important that the last paragraph contains the purpose of this analysis. Please add aims of this analysis in the last paragraph of the introduction phase.
Author response: the comments were accepted and the correction was made

3. In the introduction section the author state that there is scarce data on disrespect and abuse of women during the process of childbirth at health facilities in SSA. It seems the paper seek to compare available data from published studies rather than addressing scarcity of data on D&A. I would suggest the authors consider changing this sentence into lack of studies, which have compared prevalence data for D&A from various countries.
Dear Reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

Methods
1. Search strategy is well explained and shows each step that was followed. However, it is not clear whether the search was limited to primary research, secondary analysis or systematic reviews, qualitative or quantitative papers only. It will add more value if you could explain which type of studies were included in the search.
Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

2. Please also include timeframe for papers, which were included in the meta-analysis. The method section would be strengthened for adding more contents on what was the inclusion timeline for the published papers. Please state publication time periods for papers included in the initial search.
Author; correction was made according to your comment.

3. The authors presents the search outcome in result section, however in typical PRISMA outline, the search results i.e. number of articles retrieved, number excluded through abstract and title review, and final number after screening for main texts should be presented in the method section. This will leave result section to cover comparisons between the reviewed papers and meta-analysis.
Author; correction was made according to your comment.

4. In exclusion criteria, please indicate how many papers were excluded using each of those criteria, since those papers were included in the first phase search.
Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

5. Data collection and analysis should explicit show if primary study datasets were secured from authors or if the analysis was only dependent on the presented estimates in the paper. The method section should explain which approach was used to combined dataset from all studies and how pooled analysis was done to come up with point estimates for different countries.
The pooled prevalence of disrespect and abuse of women during the process of childbirth at health facilities with 95%CI was calculated using the random effects model

6. The analysis should explain how the author dealt with variation in methods used to calculate prevalence to be able to combined and come with one estimate. It will add more strength to the method section if reference is made to similar analysis even in other field, which used the same analysis method to this one.
Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

7. In data analysis subsection the author is referring to table 1 in result section. The author should avoid referring results in method section. This sentence should be removed or revised accordingly.
8. Please state statistical package used for analysis. It is not clear if the analysis was done using either excel, stata or another package.
Data analysis was implemented using Stata statistical software, version 15 (Stata Corp LP, College Station, TX, USA).

Results
9. I would suggest removing the first paragraph of finding section. This should be moved to method section since as a standard reporting format, this is reported in method section

Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

10. Operational definition should be moved to introduction section and any variation in the definition should be compared across various studies.
Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.
11. The author presents sub-group analysis, however it is not clear if all the studies did have estimates for all dimensions of D&A, or others were missing some of the dimensions and what was done in that case. Please explain how this was approached in this analysis.

Dear, I calculated some of the dimensions which reported on the primary studies.

Discussion

12. Please indicate limitations of the study in the discussion section.

Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

13. The author provides various reasons for the findings of the study. However some of the reasons do not present references. The author should put references to stated reasons in the discussion section to improve clarity.

Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

14. In this study disrespect and abuse of women during the process of childbirth at health facilities is high compared to other studies, particularly abandonment is high compared to other studies.

Tables and Abstract

Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

16. Please insert titles of tables and figures inside the main text to relevant section.

Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

17. Figure 1 title should be included in the method section.

Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

Reviewer 2:

1. As the authors acknowledge (though almost in passing) in the discussion section, disrespect has social and cultural connotations. This needs to be discussed in some detailed in the introduction and discussion sections, and if possible, give some parameters of disrespect to guide the readers. The same (giving some parameters) would be useful, e.g., for physical abuse - what does it entail (battering, verbal abuse etc.,?). Similarly, the authors may also indicate whose point of view we are looking it (mothers, health workers, etc.)

Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

2. The authors should bring out the significance/contribution of the study to the understanding of the global and region desired health/development outcomes or targets, for example SDGs. Why is respect to mothers at health facilities important, does it contribute or constrain better health outcomes (e.g., discourage mothers from delivering from health facilities, hence.....?) The authors could also mention how respect and dignity is a human right etc. This could be in the background section and possibly brought back in the discussion.

Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

3. In the methodology, the authors clearly indicate the number of articles analyzed (21), but it would be useful to indicate countries of their origin. It is possible that they are all from 2 or 3 countries. The authors make attempts to bring out the socio-cultural variations as possible reason for variations in the results regarding prevalence of disrespect - but this is done for the first time in the discussion, the material is not in even in the results section. It would be better to bring this out right from the methods and results section.

Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

4. The discussion section is not strong enough. What do results of high prevalence of disrespect to mothers during child birth at health facilities mean? What are contextual factors, relationships, linkages implications etc. While the authors focused on reviewing and analyzing only quantitative studies, I would recommend that in this section reviewing qualitative studies of quality maternal care would be very useful in interpreting and discussing the results.
Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.

5. There are some repetitions that the authors need to edit out. For example, many sentences in the opening paragraphs in the introductory section seem to be pointing to the same thing. The authors should carefully review the first three paragraphs. Similarly, the second paragraph in the discussion section is a repetition of what is presented in the introduction.

Dear, reviewer accepted your comments and revision was made.