Author's response to reviews

Title: Risk of Violence from the Man Involved in the Pregnancy after Receiving or Being Denied an Abortion

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Version: 2
Date: 23 July 2014

Author's response to reviews: see over
1. The authors indicated that 72% of baseline participants were retained at the 2.5 year assessment. This is an admirable retention rate, but nonetheless, the loss of 28% may introduce biases in your sample. Did you assess for potential biases in those lost to follow-up that may affect study findings?

_We appreciate the reviewer’s concern about whether factors other than study group were associated with loss-to-follow-up. We have added text indicating that attrition was non-differential by baseline violence (p. 6). In addition, by using all available data and not dropping subjects with missing data, the maximum likelihood methods used to fit the models protect against problems related to missing values better than other methods._

2. Do you need to consider clinic factors as covariates, such as their size/number of clients served annually, gestational age limit for abortion, legislative restrictions related to abortion in the region they serve? Or is that an issue since you have the random intercepts for facility and individual?

_The random intercepts for facility address this issue._

3. It was very surprising that there were no differences in past 6 month IPV for groups at baseline! One would think IPV would affect timing for pursuit of abortion. That is a finding in itself.

_Thank you for pointing this out; we added a sentence to the discussion about this (p. 12)._

4. Reported IPV was also lower than I would have expected, but this may be due to limited number of items measuring IPV.

_It is worth noting that the violence studied here only includes violence from the MIP. The proportion reporting past year violence from the MIP is consistent with levels of past year violence from intimate partners reported in other studies of women having abortions [1, 2]. We also address this issue in response to comment # 7 below and have added this information to the limitations section (p. 13)._

5. Could the reduction in IPV for those having an abortion be in part attributable to change in partner? Was this assessed? Could you include this as an exploratory analysis, if it was measured, to help reveal at least part of the mechanism of your observed findings?

_We believe that this is the case. We address this in the discussion p. 11 and p. 12 and refer to another paper that presents these analyses. This other paper was recently accepted at Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health [3]._

6. A very small point-Your abstract results may benefit from inclusion of data to describe the sample or highlight findings.
We have added more details re: Odds Ratios and Confidence Intervals to the results section of the abstract.

7. I believe a limitation of the study is that information about the behavior of the man involved in the pregnancy is being reported by the woman who is being abused. This is a highly emotional topic and self-report itself can be biased. Nothing can be done to change the methods, but it can be noted that there may be a bias in collecting the data in this manner.

We have added a limitation to the limitations section, p. 13. “Third, information about violence from the MIP is based on self-reports by the woman experiencing the violence and thus may be under-reported.”

Discretionary Revisions -
8. The title seems somewhat wordy or clumsy. Is there a way to make it more succinct?

We have removed: “A longitudinal study” from the title.

References

3. Mauldon J, Foster DG, Roberts SCM: Effect of abortion vs. carrying to term on a woman’s relationship with the man involved in the pregnancy. Perspect Sex Reprod Health (accepted).