Author's response to reviews

Title: Antimalarial drugs for preventing malaria during pregnancy and the risk of low birth weight: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized and quasi-randomized trials.

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Version: 3 Date: 17 July 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
July, the 17th 2015

Dear Editor,

We are very pleased to submit our revised manuscript entitled "Antimalarial drugs for preventing malaria during pregnancy and the risk of low birth weight (LBW): A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized and quasi-randomized trials which is being considered for a publication in the BMC Medicine (manuscript MS 1747032375167477).

We thank the reviewer and the editor for their final comments that helped us to improve our manuscript. As requested, you will find our response to each comment itemized one by one. The modifications are also highlighted in the final document.

We sincerely believe that our revised version of the manuscript is now ready for publication in BMC Medicine.

Sincerely,

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Answers to reviewer’s comments

Title: Antimalarial drugs for preventing malaria during pregnancy and the risk of low birth weight (LBW): A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized and quasi-randomized trials.

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Third version: Date: July, 17\textsuperscript{th} 2015
Reviewer's report

Title: Antimalarial drugs for preventing malaria during pregnancy and the risk of low birth weight: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized and quasi-randomized trials.

Version: 2
Date: 22 June 2015
Reviewer: Kassoum Kayentao

Reviewer's report:
I am happy with the authors' responses. However, the authors did not justify why fixed or random effect was used. Please read below:
Random effect model was suggested for the analysis. However fixed effect was used in some results. Can the authors explain and justify why random effects models are used for some analysis and fixed-effects models for other?

Authors’ response: Following the editor’s recommendation, we included a clear statement in the methods section of our manuscript to explain why random and fixed models were used.

See in page 9, lines 10-17:
"We calculated the summary risk ratio (RR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) using a random-effects model (method of Der Simonian & Laird) due to differences between study populations and interventions [28]. This model considers the variation within and between RCTs in their calculation of the overall effect size [20]. Given that RCTs included in our review were carried out across different African countries, with different populations, interventions and with different level of antimalarial drugs resistance [9, 12, 23], we assumed that the random effect model was the most appropriate model to calculate the summary estimate for all analyses. In sensitivity analysis, we used a fixed effect model to test the robustness of our findings [20]."

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I don’t have any conflict of interest
Editor's report: Claire Barnard

There are also a small number of editorial points that should be addressed at this stage, which I have listed below:

1. Please add a statement to the authors' contributions section to confirm whether all authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

Authors’ response: We thank the editor for her comment. We added a statement to the authors' contributions section to confirm that all authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

See in page 23, lines 4-5.

"All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript".

2. In the competing interests section, please mention your role as a steering committee member for RQRM, and list any other authors that are affiliated with the organisation. Please include a statement to explain whether the funders were involved in the study design, conduct, and decision to submit the manuscript for publication.

Authors’ response: We thank the editor for his comment. We added a statement in the competing interests section that mentioned the role of the funders and our role as a steering committee member for RQRM.

See in page 22, lines 15-18.

"Anick Bérard is the Director of the "Réseau Québécois de recherche sur le médicament (RQRM""). Sylvie Perreault is a steering committee member for the RQRM. Flory Tsobo Muanda, Sonia Chaabane, Takoua Boukhris, Fabiano Santos, Odile Sheehy and Lucie Blais are members of RQRM. These authors declare that they have no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the study design, data collection and analysis, writing and decision to submit the manuscript for publication".
Again, we thank the reviewer and the editor for their valuable comments. We have answered all comments and integrated them in the revised manuscript. We now believe that our revised manuscript is ready for publication in BMC Medicine.

Very kind regards.

Dr Anick Bérard,

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