Author’s response to reviews

Title: Time motion study using mixed methods to assess service delivery by Frontline health workers from South-India: Methods

Authors:

Samiksha Singh (drsamiksha.singh@gmail.com;samiksha.singh@iiphh.org)
Sanjeev Upadhyaya (supadhyaya@unicef.org)
Pradeep Deshmukh (prdeshmukh@gmail.com)
Amol Dongre (amolrdongre@gmail.com)
Neha Dwivedi (indianeha2008@gmail.com)
Deepak Dey (dkdey@unicef.org)
Vijay Kumar (svijay@cess.ac.in)

Version: 1 Date: 27 Nov 2017

Author’s response to reviews:

Response to Reviewer reports:

Reviewer #1: I think that the subject of using a time motion study to assess service delivery of front line health workers (FLHW) in am important topic. In particular, evaluating how FLHW are using their time and are they becoming less efficient and whether or not there is a difference based upon location or cultural groups. The findings from this study will add to the literature in a significant way.

Response: Thank you for your encouragement.

I did not find that in-depth description about how you went about conducting this study to be helpful and did not add to the body of knowledge about how to conduct a time-motion study. It could have been summarized in about half the length and made much clearer about the high level steps that were taken with less about the routine details of conducting a mixed method study and then identify some of the main lessons learned.

Response: Thank you for your genuine feedback. We have deleted the unnecessary details and have summarized the main lessons.

Edits are done at several places throughout the manuscript.
However we beg to differ here on not adding to knowledge about how to conduct a TAM study. The extensive literature search suggested that there are a very few TAM studies conducted on community level workers due to the complexity in their work structure, including field movements, interactions between different field cadres, and variations in geographies and health systems. Due to these challenges, the potential of using TAM in efficient work planning and redefining job responsibilities for community level cadre is not considered. Our purpose of publishing the detailed methods paper is two folds. One to help researchers and programmers understand the concerns of TAM studies and how we addressed those for community level health work force. Secondly, this paper will be a reference to methods for the subsequent results papers.

I somehow expected that there would be some findings. I would recommend that you rework this paper once you have the findings and have a clear and substantive section on methods used.

Response: We appreciate your interest in results. As you may understand the purpose of this methods paper, adding detail results here will require majorly cutting on methods to control for word count. But as per your suggestion, we have added main conclusions from overall results in this paper. We have written separate result papers for each of the cadre which are under revisions before submission.

Edits done in Results section, Page 15 and 16

In the future I would include more in the methods on how you did the analysis of the mixed-methods and less about the steps you took doing the various phases of data collection in the field work. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this in more detail.

Response: We have added little more details on how the analysis and triangulation was carried out in analysis section. Please let us know if this answers your concerns. We will update you on our results papers, subsequently.

Edits done in analysis section, Page 14, lines 13-18

Reviewer #2: It's important do describe the aims of the study with the verbs in the infinitive. Distinguish the aims of the study form the study commissioned. This will make easier for the reader's comprehension.

Response: Thank you. We have edited as suggested.

Edit done on page 7, line 2

"The ethics approval was obtained from institutional ethics committee". Please include the submission/aproval number of ethics committee in the Methods.

Response: Added.
Tools and pilot tests were mentioned, but haven't been presented nor described.

Response: Kindly note that in the tools and pilot test section, we have stated that they are described in the main study section. We did this to avoid duplication and just state the final ones. Kindly refer to section on main study for the description on data collection tools and processes. About the tools, these were a few which we can share if requested.

Some terms used for search, but were not found in Dec's or Mash, please make sure they are correctly described.

Response: We described the general terms which were adapted to each of the search engines’ Mesh terms. In the revised version, we have taken out these as per the recommendation of the other reviewer who suggested to omit extra details.

I suggest describing the contents, guides and schedules of the interviews, it’s important to understand the paths covered by the search.

Response: We have described the process of tool development in section on inductive approach on page 10 and then described the observation tool components in brief in section data collection tools page 11-12. There were several tools, which we can share if requested.

"We faced challenge while recording multi-tasking by workers, which was appropriately dealt." How was this dealt? it would be appropriate to describe these tasks by professional cadre or to create a figure and insert in the text.

Response: We have described this in methods section. Kindly refer to page 10, line 20-22 in section pilot testing. The approach was same for each cadre.

"A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is described in Table 3." In the text doesn't have any description related the moment of the choice to construct the SWOT analysis, and the results in "Strengths, Weaknesses" are related to the study?; and “Opportunities and Threats” are related to the study commissioned? The results have to talk to each other.

Response: We conducted SWOT analysis once after finalization of the protocol and revised it after completion of the preliminary analysis. We present the later here. We have added this in methods section. Yes the SWOT is linked to results but we found it fitting better in the discussion. As per your suggestions we have described more on our SWOT in the text.

Edit done in discussion section, page 17, line 11-18

It is necessary to review the figures.

Response: We did review our figures and to us they seem to align with the description of methods. If you may have any specific concerns please let us know. Thank you for your review.