Author's response to reviews

Title: How prepared are young, rural women in India to address their sexual and reproductive health needs? A cross-sectional assessment of youth in Jharkhand.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Author Response to Reviewers

Reviewer #1

Reviewer’s report: Discretionary Revisions
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Reviewer #2

Reviewer’s report:
The authors cover an untouched area -sexual and reproductive health needs of young rural women. They provide a sound background with justifying the need for the study and adequate relatively recent referencing. Objectives are clearly indicated.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. This manuscript seems to have followed a satisfactory and appropriate methodology. However, it lacks sample size calculation and/or basis for such a calculation. Reviewer found no details on justification or basis as to how 690 married and 691 unmarried women were selected for the study.

   The minimum sample size was computed for a future pre-post comparison study of a BCC intervention designed to improve young women’s knowledge and awareness of abortion legality. We are using the baseline data for a descriptive analysis of married and unmarried women, and have therefore chosen to omit the sample size calculations because it will be distracting from the current analysis. Our sample of 690 married and 691 unmarried women is clearly sufficient to detect differences in knowledge of sex/pregnancy, contraception and legality of abortion, as denoted by statistically significant differences in Table 4.

2. Authors give a good account of study instruments. Data collectors have been given an adequate training. However, the setting and how the questionnaire was administered are not mentioned. Readers wish to know more details on precautions undertaken by data collectors in conducting interviews in this type of research especially covering sensitive reproductive issues.

   We have added additional details in the methods section, and noted it here for convenience:
   Prior to study enrolment, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Young female research investigators conducted the interviews to increase comfort in discussing sensitive issues. To ensure privacy and confidentiality, each respondent was asked to choose a private room or other location where they would be comfortable talking about sensitive topics. If it was not possible to conduct the interview with sufficient privacy, the research team scheduled an appointment with the respondent to return and conduct the interview at a later date.

3. Authors have presented sound data to cover the research question under study. Tables need complying with journal requirements. Some data eg. Age at marriage, in years —may be
removed and mentioned in text. Statistics appear to be genuine without indications of manipulation. The manuscript does not adhere to the journal’s standards for reporting and data deposition.

We have adjusted the tables to comply with the instructions for authors. Thank you for pointing out our omission.

4. The discussion covers major findings of the study and possible circumstances for such results. However, it lacks comparing and supporting adequately with already published data ie. inadequate referencing

We have expanded the discussion to improve referencing to previously published data.

5. Conclusions need further expansion. Recommendations include only behavior change communication intervention targeting youths. Reviewer suggests inclusion of SRH issues in school-based education, adult education, and also male participation and education in such issues.

We have expanded on the conclusion section, as suggested.

6. The title is comprehensive but abstract needs revision to convey actual methodology.

We have revised the abstract to clarify the study methodology, as requested.

7. Reviewer found several grammatical errors – be careful in using the tense and using “The” in several places. Overall, the language needs revisiting.

We have reviewed and adjusted grammar/tense, as appropriate.