Author’s response to reviews

Title: Factors Influencing Men’s Involvement in Antenatal Care Services: A Cross-Sectional Study in a Low Resource Setting, Central Tanzania.

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Author’s response to reviews:

We thank the reviewers for their valuable comments which have greatly improved our manuscript. The table below presents a point by point response to Reviewers’ comments.

Reviewer #1

Title
Comments: Be careful that all statements are clear and well supported with evidence from this research or the literature
Responses: Reviewed the title to ensure clarity and consistency with literature. The word predictors has been replaced with the word “factors influencing”

Abstract
Comments: Avoid abbreviations where possible in abstract
Responses: The abbreviation “ANC” has been deleted

Comments: This is quite a strong statement – is men’s involvement necessary or suggested?
Responses: The word necessary has been replaced with “…” recommended as an important factor”
Remarks: Accepted all other spelling and grammar changes as suggested by the Reviewer

Introduction
Comments: Reference?
Responses: Citation [1] has been inserted

Methods
Comment: One street or multiple streets?
Responses: It was one street selected randomly in each two wards located in Municipal council making a total of six villages and two streets and not “making a total of four villages and two streets”
Comments: “Was the score 0 to 1 or 0 to 2? 
Responses: Corrected, the score was 0 to 2. The level of involvement was classified as follows: a score of zero to 1…”
Remarks: Accepted all changes in this section but made minor correction as it is shown in the manuscript

Results
Comments: This is extremely unusual, how can you explain a 100% responses rate?
Responses: During data collection an additional sample of 125 respondents were added increasing the sample size from 841 to 966. Also, because of the nature of the topic more participants were very interested to participate in the study. In order to increase the validity of the study by controlling unforeseen confounders, allowance was made to increase the sample size.

Comments: What type of information are you refereeing to here? ….”Men who had no information…”
Responses: Corrected the statement to refer …..Access to ANC information”

Comments: Which variables were determined to be confounding? How was this decided?
Responses: In our multiple logistic model, potential factors that showed a statistically significant relationship with male involvement after Chi-square test were simultaneously entered in the model to control for confounding between the factor of interest and the outcome variable.

Comments: Table 2: The total is greater than 100%
Responses: Totaling was made in rows and not columns

Discussion
Comments: What is the evidence for this? Your results did not demonstrate this as currently presented
Responses: “It is more likely that, exposure to ANC information has a great potential of addressing misconceptions and myths that renders men from being involved in maternal care.” If this information will be communicated well to all men and be involved in health education related to antenatal care, they would be empowered to embrace the opportunity to play their role as partners in reproductive health.” The paragraph has been revised to reflect the findings…..

Comments: What information?
Responses: ‘…..Access to ANC information

Reviewer #2

Abstract
Comments: Please remove reference to 'motive' in the abstract as your study has not investigated men's motivation to participate in antenatal services. Consider using 'barriers', 'factors'.
Responses: The word “motive” has been replaced with the word “factor”

Introduction
Comments: Consider removing the sentence "Worldwide each year about 210 million women become pregnant…” page 5, line 1. Its current place makes it sound like maternal health risks are due solely to
lack of partner involvement, however there are many individual, interpersonal, community and socio-political factors that contribute to maternal morbidity and mortality.

Responses: The statement has been removed as per Reviewer’s recommendation

Comments: Please be consistent in the use of abbreviations. The manuscript switches from antenatal care to ANC throughout. There are also abbreviations that are not written in full previously (e.g., MDGs), so lay readers will not be aware of what these stand for. Additionally, there is no need to use an abbreviation if you only refer to it once.

Responses: Use of abbreviations has been revisited throughout the document as recommended by the Reviewer

Comments: Please provide more context around the sentences: "The delay in making a decision to seek health care …" page 5, line 40; and "Awareness among men on pregnancy…” page6, line 6. Are these within African cultures, or found for men globally?

Responses: Review of the sections has been made to make it reflect on the African cultural context

Methods and Materials

Comments: Within the Study setting and design section, please provide more demographic information on the representativeness of men living within Dodoma to men from Tanzania more broadly.

Responses: This is a very important observation. Authors are very thankful to the Reviewer. The needed demographic information about the respondents for both national and regional level have been added

Comments: Please provide more details on measures/variables, for example, you could list some of your actual questions. I was left unsure what some variable were actually capturing, especially the variable 'information' and 'time'.

Responses: Four dichotomized (yes/no) measures were used to assess men’s involvement making a total score of Four with those scoring above. Two were categorized as having high men’s involvement. This information has been added in the respective section. Information about important independent variables and their measurements has been added as well.

Results

Comments: Please take n's out of write up of results; it is repetitive to what is found within the tables. o When reporting significance levels in text, report as p<.001, p<.05, or p<.01 if results are statistically significant.

Responses: The result section has been revised, removing the “n” (counts) where they seemed to repeat what is already in the tables. Significance levels has been revisited as per Reviewer’s recommendations

Discussion

Comments: While the findings of this study have the prospect of important research and clinical recommendations/implications, my main concern is that the discussion in its current form fails to adequately discuss these. The current arguments within the discussion are not strong, especially when there is frequent mention throughout regarding findings not being well understood. I also feel that there is too much discussion on how the current findings are similar to or differ from other studies, where more focus should be spent discussing the meaning and implications of the current results.

Responses: The discussion has been reviewed to address flaws pointed out by the Reviewer

Comments: A few other suggestions: * I encourage the authors to thoroughly reread their manuscript, or engage in professional editorial services, as there are grammatical and editorial errors throughout. At
times writing could be more concise; some sentences tend to be long and confusing.
Responses: Grammatical corrections have been made throughout the document

Comments: More discussion could have been included around what could be investigated in the future, and why this would be helpful. For example, some of the other variables that were not currently investigated but may contribute to men's involvement and participation in antenatal services may include individual factors (such as men's motivation and views on masculinity) or system factors (such as whether men found professionals supportive or engaging, or operating hours, professionals understanding of men's needs, etc).
Responses: Recommendations for future studies have been included in the discussion section. Emphasis has been put on... exploring men’s expectation of ANC services and exploring ways to meaningfully integrate them in couple friendly ANC services. Also the need to assess the cultural competency of care providers in attending male partners accompanying their spouses for ANC services. Factors such as religion, were observed to be significant factors influencing men’s involvement; there is therefore a need for studies to explore potential barriers that are strongly connected to religious beliefs and see how religion could be effectively used as a platform for health promotion interventions including appropriate media messages

Comments: Regarding your discussion about the current sample of men providing physical support to their partners and how this differs from other studies is slightly flawed - women may still participate in work while pregnant, but their partners may provide them with physical support in the home. More detail around the physical support measure/variable could be included in the methods section.
Responses: In this study physical support meant workload relief/help provided to a pregnant woman in performing domestic works at home

Conclusion
Comments: Your reasoning that men's involvement in discussion of maternal health care issues implies that most men did not have contact with health care providers is not accurately reflected in your results. Your results highlight that a great deal of men found health care professionals as unfriendly, this likely contributes to men not engaging and discussing issues with the health professional.
Responses: The conclusion section has been revised to reflect the remarkable findings of the study and the discussion thereof.