Author’s response to reviews

Title: Before and after implementation of group antenatal care in Rwanda: a qualitative study of women’s experiences

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To the editor and reviewers of the manuscript REPH-D-18-00356R1:

This author team is grateful for your thoughtful feedback regarding this manuscript, which we have re-titled “Before and after implementation of group antenatal care in Rwanda: a qualitative study of women’s experiences.” We believe that your comments, and our responses to them, have significantly increased the quality of the manuscript and we ask for your reconsideration of the revised version. We look forward to any further feedback you provide.

Below, we respond point-by-point to the Reviewers’ comments.

Reviewer #1:

We agree that the qualitative study has intrinsic importance, as understanding the opinions and experiences of women is equally or more important than quantifying birth outcomes. We hope to frame this report as one part of a large project that will share multiple sets of results, including qualitative data collection that follows-on to the results offered in this manuscript.
With respect to these sentences found in the first draft:

"In Round One, 45% of women were 21 years old or younger and 55% were older than 21 years. In Round 2, 4% of women were 21 years old or younger and 96% were older than 21 years."

We removed these sentences; upon further reflection we thought they were extraneous. Would you allow for these sentences to be removed? Interestingly, 7% of births in Rwanda are to women ages 15-19, according to the 2015 Demographic and Health Survey, but data are not available specific to the birth rate of women under 22 years of age.

Reviewer #2:

Thank you for your counsel to shorten the manuscript. We have shortened the main body of text by about 400 words, or approximately 10%. We reduced the number of verbatims by 40% and summarized some verbatims into more concise sentences.

You rightly pointed out that in-text numbers were inconsistently written and we have corrected this.

At your suggestion, we altered the title and believe it is clearer and more concise than the previous title.

With respect to the first sentence of the Background section, in the first draft of the manuscript—we have removed it in response to your feedback.

We included the year of currency exchange when referring to the conversion of Rwandan Francs to USD.

In the Methods section, with respect to reaching saturation before including Nyamasheke district in the pre-implementation FGDs—we have added two sentences about this point in the Limitations section.

We clarified the issue about the use of Atlas.Ti.

We appreciate your suggestion to add a table summarizing the results, which we have included as Table 1.

We offer our sincere thanks to the Editor and Reviewers for their thoughtful assistance.