Author’s response to reviews

Title: Perceptions and intervention preferences of Moroccan adolescents, parents, and teachers regarding risks and protective factors for risky sexual behaviors leading to sexually transmitted infections in adolescents: Qualitative findings

Authors:

Hicham EL KAZDOUH (hicam_kazdouk@yahoo.com)
Abdelghaffar EL-AMMARI (svt_agregation@hotmail.com)
Siham BOUFTINI (siham-bouftini@hotmail.com)
Samira EL FAKIR (elfakirsamira@yahoo.fr)
Youness EL ACHHAB (youness_elachhab@yahoo.fr)

Version: 4 Date: 28 May 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your reply and comments.

Comments and responses:

Comment 1: It is stated that the focus is on 10-19-year olds in the background, yet data collected was for adolescents 14-16 years, please elaborate.

Response: Thank you for this comment. In the background, we focused on results from quantitative studies which collected data mostly from adolescents aged 10-19 years old. The age group 14-16 years was selected in this study because their school curriculum includes topics related to health risk behaviors and also for homogeneity and the nature of the qualitative study. To the best of our knowledge, data in 14-16-year class is not documented.

Comment 2: For the abstract, rephrase "three datasets" to "three sets of data"
Response: Thank you for this comment. This sentence was rephrased and edited as you recommend:

“Three sets of data were initially formed, coded, and analyzed using thematic analysis.”

Comment 3: Page 2, line 27-28: under the sentence "…exploring suggestions of adolescents and others" please be more specific on "others", perhaps you can state and rephrase to "exploring perceptions of adolescents, parents and teachers"

Response: Thank you for this comment. This sentence was rephrased and edited as you recommend:

“…and exploring perceptions of adolescents, parents and teachers regarding effective intervention preferences could improve the sexual health of adolescents.”

Comment 4: Page 4, line 90-92, Under introduction section: There is a lot of discussion on HIV, but STI goes beyond HIV, however, it is mentioned that Moroccan adolescents have low awareness of STI, can you provide data for this? i.e. what are the proportions?

Response: Thank you for this comment which is very useful. I agree with you that STIs goes beyond HIV, but data on sexually transmitted diseases (STIs) are very scarce, as are studies on this issue in MENA countries, including Morocco, particularly in relation to adolescents' knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases. For this reason, we relied on data from international organizations such as UNAIDS and UNICEF who are more interested in HIV. We have also relied on some studies regarding adolescent reproductive health in MENA countries.

In Morocco, we found only one study that talks about the knowledge of human papillomavirus and the acceptability of vaccination in adolescents and young people, which showed that only 20% of the study population was aware of HPV. This reference has been added in the text. The sentence was rephrased and references have been rectified as follows:

“Nevertheless, several studies indicated that adolescents in Arab countries including Morocco still unaware about risky sexual behaviors and STIs [8, 9, 11, 19-26].”

Comment 5: Page 5, line 93: It is stated that "adolescents tend to have lower rates of morbidity and mortality" This is not true, please provide statistics on which particular health area this may be the case with reference.
Response: Thank you for this comment which is very valuable. I agree with you. This sentence was rephrased to be clear as follows:

“There is evidence that sexually active adolescents are at an augmented risk for STIs, including HIV, compared with other age group for a combination of behavioral, biological, and cultural reasons [2, 4, 6, 10, 27].”

Comment 6: When referring to FDGs conducted for parents, it is stated "5 girls and 21 men" would you please revise this to reflect that they are females and not girls. This is on pages 7 (line 153-157) and page 9 (line 162).

Response: thank you for this valuable remark. These were rephrased and edited and all changes are colored, as follows:

“We conducted 8 FGDs with 56 adolescents (28 boys and 28 girls),”

“In addition, we conducted 5 FGDs of parents (5 females and 21 males) who were selected based on their voluntary participation.”

Comment 7: Page 9, line 202: Rephrase "saved in a private place where only the principal author had access…." To "secured where only the principal investigator had access"

Response: This sentence was rephrased and edited as you recommend:

“The names of participants were kept separately from tape recordings, transcripts, and field notes, and secured where only the principal investigator had access.”

Comment 8: Page 10, lines 223-231 under Data Analysis, there is a shift in sentence construction between present and past tense. Since this study was done in 2016, I would suggest you use past tense.

Response: This paragraph was rephrased and edited as follows:

“The themes generated captured something important about the data in relation to the research question. The next phase consisted of reviewing themes, which was an iterative process, as we constantly moved back and forth between the selected extracts from the data and the entire dataset to ensure the applicability of themes. Once the themes have been established, they were defined and labeled in such a way that they were conceptually distinguishable from each other. After that, the process of writing the final report began by making a set of fully-developed
themes with vivid examples reflecting the essence of each theme and contributing significantly to answering the research question.”