Author’s response to reviews

Title: Domestic violence related disclosure among women and girls in Ethiopia: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Authors:
Berhanu Boru Bifftu (berhanuboru@gmail.com)
Berihun Dachew (berihunassefa21@gmail.com)
Bewket Tiruneh (jeryfiker21@gmail.com)
Lemma Gezie (lemmagezie@gmail.com)
Yonas Guracho (yonasderessa19@gmail.com)

Version: 1 Date: 18 Nov 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

Date: November 18, 2019

Subject-Submission of the revised versions manuscript entitle: “Domestic violence related disclosure among women and girls in Ethiopia: A systematic review and meta-analysis”

Dear editor,

Greeting,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to address the reviewers’ comments. All the comments were very helpful to improve the quality of the paper. We have carefully revised our manuscript based on the comments and suggestions. Below, we have provided a point-by-point response to the reviewer’s comments and suggestions.

With regards,

Berhanu Boru
Reviewer ≠1

Abstract
→ better not to use abbreviations in the abstract, and if you use them then best to use them constantly.
→ after aimed no:
→ domestic violence cannot be 'treated', this way it becomes something medicalized.
Domestic violence can be prevented, women can be protected from it,

Plain English Summary
→ Unclear is the systematic review only about Ethiopian literature, or also other countries.
This is something crucial so it should be much clearer at this point.
→ Conclusion is problematic, why only the empowerment of women? Maybe there should be recommendations regarding structural barriers or the role of men.

Background
→ abbreviations are not consistently use
→ Factors such as gender norms, poverty, denied access to education, lack of autonomy, inequitable gender attitudes, women's accept justified wife beating and partner alcohol use associated with DV
This analysis would be more interesting if repetition was avoided and a distinction made between macro, meso and micro factors
→ Was there before nothing about women's right and gender equality in the family law?
→ What is the difference with previous family laws?
→ In Ethiopia; is not necessary - thorough revision for sentence construction is also necessary
→ Disclose does not to be explained
→ EDHS needs to be written full out the first time
However, individual studies are important, the variation in reported prevalence of non-disclosure and to the best of authors' knowledge, lack of systematic review and meta-analysis need comprehensively summarized evidence about violence related disclosure of women and girls in Ethiopia. This sentence is unclear

Thank you. This has been corrected.

Corrected

It say the adverse effect of DV. For example physical injury, psychological problem like depression…are medical and since this study focus on those women and girls who experienced DV, it is treated.

Yes, DV is global, but the cause is varied from country to country, which need contextual solution, So

Corrected

Checked in the current manuscript

Modified in the current document.

Modified

Modified

Corrected

Addressed in methods section under definition of concepts

Thank you modified.
2. Methods

Search strategy (title is missing)

how did you intend to find unpublished material when you only go through international databases?

When was the database searched for the last time?

given your definition, what does this then make a difference with other forms of gendered violence? I find there is a strong bias in your definition, it should be better explained and informed.

What were the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the reviewers to make an assessment?

What about qualitative studies? There is nothing explicitly about this, while this is a theme and research question that can be very well addressed by qualitative methods

Nice observation. This has been corrected now.

We were not only go through international databases. We used Google scholar to include unpublished material. Refer the searched databases.

Indicated in methods section under search strategy as “until February, 18, 2019”.

Our definition is not unique. It is defined by WHO and utilized in different countries including Ethiopia. Rather the fear may there are studie that did not used the WHO tool and that is why we include under the limitation.
This is clearly written in method section refer under Eligibility criteria.

Here the primary objective of the study is pooled prevalence of Dv-related disclosure which is (quantitative) and to address your fear, we included this as a limitation for reader.

3. Results

There are very limited results, this is too little to really publish about. I suggest to make to broaden the geographical area or to different types of violence, or that more in-depth information is given about based on the different included studies =

Increasing the number of studies is important for the representativeness of the population; however, authors did not belief that 21 studies are limited. One of the main objectives of meta-analysis is to be representative. For example, two studies are better than one, three studies are better than two studies…to be the representativeness of the population to whom it serves as a source.

4. Discussion

It is unclear of the UNICEF report was included in the analysis but if so this is something that should be discussed in the results.

the inclusion of different samples seems more to be something that follows out of the inclusion criteria than an active attempt.

Again nothing about qualitative methods

or about the limited geographical focus of Ethiopia.

Modified
→ In the method section under the 5th bullet, you raised a question as there is no inclusion and exclusion criterion with “What were the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the reviewers to make an assessment?” statement, but here belief as there is inclusion criteria that is different from….The authors of this study put general population and high school/university students as the study population and there is no other included study population that is different from the planed.

→ This is the repetitions in method section under the 6th bullet.

→ Yes, even though DV is universal, the magnitude, cause and way of prevention is contextual in most case, that is why we focus on studies carried out in Ethiopia.

Conclusion

→ Remains superficial, there is also nothing about structural factors and the role of men. What could be done to improve the situation of women and girls confronted with DV?

→ There is some interesting work done on violence in European settings by Dr. Sophie Withaeckx,

→ Modified in the current paper

→ Thank you for suggest of this important material.

Reviewer #2:

→ Dear BMC Reproductive Health Editor, thank you for the chance given to review a research article titled "Domestic Violence related disclosure among women and girls in Ethiopia: A systematic review and meta-analysis". Effective time management particular for those who are directly involved in the process of care of human being. Hence, this research will discover the colossal time management problem in the health sector. The following are my comments:
On the Abstract Section

→ Strong, justifiable and witnessing background is needed.
→ Try to add key words?

On the Introduction

→ Try to present poor reproductive health outcome of the mother and the newborn separately and exclusively?

→ You jumped from global to the Ethiopian context and you didn’t mention African regional data on domestic violence?

→ Is that on the general population or on the pregnant women or combination of the three; the girls, general population and the pregnant women or mixed?

On the Methods Section

On Eligibility Criteria

→ Why you don’t limit year/time of literatures? Since the issue was under publication after 2000’s in Ethiopia? If you have no language criteria, literature of how many language were used. Why you lack criteria for it?

→ From where you reviewed gray literatures?

→ Why only cross sectional and cohort studies? Have you included qualitative studies?
Mention inclusion of special populations like pregnant women? Have you estimated pooled estimate by incorporating pregnant women?

On search strategy

Have you scanned for selected bibliographies?

Who developed the search strategy? Who reviewed the search strategy? If yes is there modification?

Risk of Bias in individual studies

How risk of bias was assessed?

Have you calculated X2 to assess heterogeneity?

Methodology criteria and its interpretation were not well presented.

On the result Section

You have excluded studies by reading titles, why not you included reading the abstracts?

Present prevalence of disclosure before presentation of the factors associated with disclosure?

On the prevalence of Disclosure

In writing the magnitude of the disclosure of the domestic violence state evidence of Q and r2, even if you didn't select the literatures purposely tell us geographical distribution of pooled estimate, sub group analysis of participants like girls, general population, pregnant women, pregnant Vs non pregnant? Married Vs unmarried? Physical, mental and psychological/emotional violence independently?

How many cohort studies? On the factors associated with domestic violence?
On the discussion and conclusion

- Present your findings, try to compare with relevant literatures, and justify properly/

Your justification and explanation lacks reference?

- What are limitations of your conclusion?

Your conclusions were weak and lack recommendations drawn from your result?

- What are the implications of your findings?

- Accepted and modified

- This has been included, it may be because of the journals rule removed.
Thank you. Corrected

This is on the general population.

This is because of authors’ intention to include all the avail studies. Since no previous review was carried out on this specific issue (disclosure). However, the publications are after 2000 and authors were not belief on the restriction of language rather the strength part of the study.
This is based on the primary objective of the study (pooled prevalence of Dv-related disclosure) and even if qualitative studies help the 2nd objective, we included this in limitation part as the limitation of this study.

Modified.

Including the search strategy, all the proposed manuscript was developed by the primary author (BBB), all the authors are invited to revise, so, based on the correction of the feedback the search was performed.

Evidence of bias was assessed using Egger’s test and the visual inspection of the asymmetry in funnel plots

Yes, refer in methods section under subheading “Data synthesis”

Modified in the current work.
Even though it has its limitation (i.e., may lose studies). The main purpose of title screening is to assess the titles for eligibility, to remove duplicates and visibility issues.

This is based on the preferred way of presenting results as qualitative results are better if come first; otherwise, it is open for re-arrange, but re-arranged in the current work.

Yes, the results of heterogeneity, publication bias, and sensitivity test were reported and there is no indication to perform subgroup analysis; that is why authors did not present the subgroup, but in the current work for the sake of clarity, we include.

Even though longitudinal as part of observational mentioned in method section, practically all the included studies report cross-sectional data (Table:1).

Checked.

Both limitations and conclusion parts are modified in the current paper.

Modified and present under the discussion part.
Reviewer #3:

This is an important article because domestic violence is worldwide a common public health problem and it is essential to identify this magnitude in order to establish the basis for prevention, control and treatment of the adverse effects. In patriarchal societies women and girls are predominantly victims of this form of violence that deserves to be well studied.

- This was a well conducted systematic review but I wonder why you only studied non disclosure of violence as the outcome variable. With a significant number of studies I think other outcomes could be incorporated to the meta-analysis.

- Does this systematic review has a protocol?

- Did you planned to study several outcomes and this was the only possible? Please justify.

- Yes as you indicated other outcome variable is possible to include from the included paper, but for truly speaking, this is based on lack of review on this specific issue.

- No, even though we search in to avoid duplication, we did not have protocol.
Yes, we have and identification of disclosure and its barrier is one of the priority we need as a gap for our next planned research.

Reviewer #4:

The overall manuscript seems to be fine. But needs revisions considering following comments.

1. Use of standard referencing style required while citing in all texts of the manuscript.

2. The quality of written English should be improved by reframing sentences, checking for spellings and grammar.

3. Background- Formatting of the text is required by avoiding unnecessary in formations.

4. Methods- Search strategy can be written concisely. Referencing of operational definitions should be included. Eligibility criteria should be reframed avoiding duplication of content.

5. Discussion- Can be written concisely.

CHECKED

Thank you. We proofread and corrected the entire paper for grammar and spelling errors.
Revised

Modified by cross check all the method sections

A lot of revisions are made and hope we improve.

Reviewer #5:

Dear Authors, Thank you very much for undertaking the study and submit the manuscript. The study area is interesting for not only Ethiopian women and girl, for women from other developing countries equally.

Background page 2, line 7 - please clarify if the 10% disclosure applicable for both providers and police.

Strategy, line 48 - Rewrite 'No time and language restrictions like  WERE SET  etc "

Participants eligibility, line 51 - Please mention any cause for exclusion of studies related to refugee, is this not discriminatory?
Discussion, line 21 - you wrote 'review and meta-analysis revealed the needs of more work' you can use the word 'indicate' rather than 'revealed' because the study did not analyze effectiveness strategy to reduce violence.

Line 39-41 - Repetition - can be avoided.

Conclusion, emphasizes only on empowerment of women and girls, but men's perception towards VAW from cultural context needs to be addressed. Empowering only women with mobile information increased violence in an intervention study in Bangladesh, you can read the article in the journal of Global Health: Science and Practice in the link http://www.ghspjournal.org/content/7/3/386

line 40 - you can use the word 'against' instead of towards.

Abbreviations - no list of abbreviations

Yes, formal service includes health care providers and police modified in the current paper for clarity.

Modified.
Yes, even if it simulates discriminatory, because of the variation in setting of the refugee from the general populations, it biases the true figure for Ethiopia.

Thank you corrected.

Corrected.

Accepted and modified in the revised paper. Thank you for the suggested reference.

Corrected.
Reviewer #6:

The manuscript represents an interesting and useful review of papers related to DV in Ethiopia. It might even be of interested to researchers from other countries of the region to understand and describe the phenomenon.

The manuscript is clearly organized and focuses on the review of prevalence and barriers.

However, some aspects must be considered:

a) the quality of English in general,

b) typos and punctuations,

c) some unreferenced statements,

d) the depth of the discussion.

Here are some specific things to consider (just as examples): Abstract: PubMed does not include a hifen

The final recommendation in the abstract could be replaced with a more specific statement: "The finding of this study suggests the need of strengthening the empowerment women and girls' to straggle with traditional belief; attitude, practice and fear associated with domestic violence related disclosure.

Page 4, line 34: spelling mistake: straggle

P. 5 L 8: no comma between subject and verb

P. 5 L. 8: referring to the most common problem. This requires a reference and its grandiloquent. I suggest to eliminate this statement.

P.5 L 32: "women's accept justified wife beating and partner
alcohol use associated with DV". Acceptance?

¬ P. 6. L 48. "No time and language restrictions during the search strategy" Verb?

¬ In the section Definiton of concepts, there are no references. It would clarify the section if it were mentioned if the authors support this definitions in literature or they developed the concepts themselves.

¬ P. 10 L 31: no comma between subject and verb

¬ P. 13 L. 26: "this study need to evaluate" this study NEEDS

¬ Thank you. We proofread and corrected the entire paper for grammar and spelling errors and all the other concerns.

¬ Nice observation, corrected.
Modified in the current document.

Checked

Corrected

Modified

Corrected

Thank you indeed.

Referenced now.
Corrected.