Author’s response to reviews

Title: Concerns and educational needs of Iranian parents regarding the sexual health of their male adolescents: a qualitative study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Prof. Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli

Please find the revised manuscript entitled " Concerns and educational needs of Iranian parents regarding sexual health of male adolescents: A qualitative study " We revised the manuscript
carefully and also edited it based on editor and reviewer comments. We hope that the revisions in
the manuscript and our accompanying responses will be sufficient to make our manuscript
suitable for publication in the Journal. We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

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Editor Comments:

Feedback to Reproductive Health: Concerns and educational needs of Iranian parents regarding
the sexual health of their male adolescents: A qualitative study.

Overall comments:

The paper contains a number of language errors which need to be corrected.

The paper is technically sound and once the language errors are corrected, the paper can be
accepted.

- We revised the manuscript and edited carefully based on editor comments.

The data analysis section is confusing to read. Structure the section with points, with clear
explanations.

-We revised this section and provided sentences for better clarification.

Specific comments:

We used all specific comments in our manuscript. We also provided point-by-point response as
follows.

Title:

No comments.
Abstract:

Line 7: Add the word the before the word sexual.
-It was corrected.

Line 9: Replace the words ‘more patents might have’ with the words ‘many parents’.
-It was corrected.

Line 43: Replace the words sexual issues with the word sexuality.
-It was corrected.

Line 49: Replace the word adolescents with the word adolescents’.
-It was corrected.

Line 51: In the list of key words, replace the words sexual education with sexuality education.
-It was corrected.

Line 23: This sentence was added for better clarifying as follows: and transcribed verbatim

Plain English summary:

Line 7: Add the word the before the word sexual.
-It was corrected.

Line 9: Replace the word children with the word children’s.
-It was corrected.

Line 14: Add the word the before the word Iranian.
-It was corrected.
Line 19: Replace the word parents with the word parents’.
-It was corrected.

Line 34: Replace the word adolescents with the word adolescents’.
-It was corrected.

Background:

Para 1:

Lines 40-47: Replace the word effect with the word effects.
-It was corrected and the sentence was revised.

Line 49: Replace the word high notified with the word highlighted.
-It was corrected.

Line 51: Delete the word the before the word most.

Line 54: Consider noting that while boys in many report having sexual relationships earlier than girls, this may not always be true.

- End part of the sentence was omitted. Please see revision line as follows:

According to available data from most countries, sexual activities begin in the early adolescence [3].

Line 56: Add the word the before the word risks.
-It was corrected.

Page 6:

Replace the term sexual health education with the term sexuality education.
-It was corrected.
Some research studies indicated that the effective parents-adolescent communication about sexual issues has been associated with delaying onset of sexual activity, greater contraceptive use, and fewer sexual risk behaviors [8, 9, 10].
Line 43: Say where this study was done.
- It was done. Please see revision line as follows:

In a review study has been conducted with American or European samples,… [14].

Line 55: Add the word a before the word negative.
- It was corrected.

Line 55: Delete the word the at the end of the sentence.
- It was corrected.

Line 58: Replace the phrase ‘concerns unique to today’s world’ with ‘as concerns’. Also provide an illustrative example of new developments.
- The changes were done and following sentences were omitted (Ref 19& 20). Please see revisions line as follows:

Globalization and developments in recent years have emerged a new need of sexuality education for young generation as concerns accessing to so many sources of sexualized information, changing patterns of sexual behaviors, sexual rights, and the threat of HIV and other STIs [4].

P3-Line 39: The sentence was revised as follows: According to a recent study conducted in Iran, mothers of female adolescents believed that they could be better sexual health educators for their girls [24].

Design and participants:

Data collection:

Data analysis:

Line 9: Delete the word the before the word parents. Consider if you want to add the phrase: ‘perception of’ before the word education.
- The sentence was revised based on the title.

Line 11: Replace the word adolescent with the word adolescents.
- It was corrected.

Line 14: Add the word was before the word conducted.

- It was corrected.

Line 24: Replace the word populations with the word population. End the sentence after this word. Add the word ‘It’ to start the next sentence before the word was.

Line 26: Provide a full reference.

The reference was revised.

Line 36: Replace the word base with the word based. Use lower case for the word status.

- we corrected both.

Line 43: Remove the word the before the term semi-. Start the sentence with that term.

- It was corrected.

Line 46: Replace the phrase ‘participant.. in open way’ with the phrase ‘participants on tehir experiences with their own words in an open way.’

- It was done.

Line 53: Add the word done before the words ‘in a’. Line 53: Delete the word first. Start the sentence with the words: The first...

Sentences were revised.

Continued onto the next page:

Line 7: Delete the word the before the word general.

- It was corrected.

Line 17: Delete the word do.
- It was corrected.

Line 20: Replace the word adolescent with the word adolescents.
- It was corrected.

Line 38: Add the word a before the word general.
- It was corrected.

Line 45: Add the word the before the word considered.
The sentence was revised.

Line 48: Delete the word the before the word spending.
- It was corrected.

Lines 48-50: I am not clear what is meant by member checking. Clarify.
- We revised this section and provided sentences for better clarification.

Lines 50-53: Explain the terms external check and peer briefing. Use lower case.
- We revised this section and provided sentences for better clarification.

Line 53: Delete the words ‘therefore research team and two qualitative researchers’ with the words ‘The research team including two expert qualitative researchers…’
- The sentence was revised.

Line 60: Add the word the before the word research.
- It was corrected.

See the general comments I have made about the data analysis section.
We revised this section and provided sentences for better clarification. Please see the part ‘Trustworthiness’

Results:

Page 1
Line 17: Replace the word was with the word is.

-It was corrected.

Line 51: Add the word a before the word 15-year.

-It was corrected.

Page 2
Line 4: Start the sentence with the words ‘While on the one hand parents…’. Add the word the before the word sexual.

-The sentence was revised.

Line 6: Add the word the before the word slow.

-It was corrected.

Page 3
Line 21: Add the word a before the word second. Replace the phrase ‘and her 13-year…were living’ with the phase: ‘with her 13-year old son living’.

-The sentence was revised.

Line 48: Replace the word sexual with the word sexuality.

-It was corrected.

Page 4
Line 44: Add the word the before the word Internet.
-It was corrected.

Page 5
Line 4: Replace the phrase ‘as a school principle’ with the phrase ‘who is a school principal’.
-It was revised.

Line 13: Use lower case for the word parents.
-It was corrected.

Lines 28, 36, 38, 49, 50, 52, 56: Replace the word sexual with the word sexuality.
-All terms were corrected.

Page 6
Lines 16, 24, 31, 46: Replace the word sexual with the word sexuality.
All terms were corrected.

Discussion:
Page 1
Line 5: Replace the word adolescent with the word adolescents.
-It was corrected.

Line 11: Mention the context of the research cited in reference 31.
We revised this line and replaced evidence based results for better explanation.

Line 16: Replace the phrase ‘private life is’ with the phrase ‘private lives are’.
-It was corrected and the sentence was revised.
-We also added a sentence at the end for better explanation.
The other important point that should be mentioned here is differences between parents in regard to the concept of sexuality in various contexts [31]. Some parents believe in abstinence and impose more control over their adolescents’ sexual behavior; or may look sexuality as a normal activity and permit adolescents more autonomy to make decisions on their sexuality [31, 32]. Obviously, there are more risks for adolescents who engage in sexual behaviors without proper knowledge and skills [4]. Thus, it is necessary that parents receive information about normal development of adolescent sexuality for proper managing of these behaviors and protecting them from sexual risks.

Lines 33 and 41: Provide the contexts for the references 32 and 35.
-Reference 32 was omitted. We provided the context for reference 35

Line 51: Replace the word mentioned with the word highlighted.
-It was corrected.

Page 2

Line 6: Replace the word talk with the word talking.
-It was corrected.

Line 16: Provide the context for the Walker study.
We omitted this sentence because we thought that no need to be mentioned here.

Lines 24-26: Provide the context for the Ballard and Gross and Kenny and Wurtele studies.
-It was done and also was replaced by new reference

Line 36: Replace the word talking sexual issues with the phrase taking about sexuality.
According to studies, the ways that parents interact with their children, as well as the strategies that they develop to protect them from specific risks have considerable influence on children’s sexual behavior [31]. Dittus et al. (2015) in a meta-analysis study reported that, parental control over adolescents was associated with delayed onset of sexual relationship or use of contraceptive methods [33]. The pubertal transition often disturbs the relationship patterns so that discussions about sexual issues may be difficult [34]. Afifi et al.’s study (2008) in the United States indicated that parents’ lack of communication skills contributed to fear of sexual discussions in adolescents and greater avoidance as a result [35]. Thus, along with changing adolescents’ sexual knowledge and behaviors, parents’ approach to discussing sex with them should be changed [34].

Line 31(51): Clarify what you mean by freedom. Do you mean lack of supervision. They mean different things.

- The sentence was revised. The first part was omitted.

Lines 50-59: Start the section on the effect of pornography on sexual behaviour with the message that the evidence of this is mixed.

- The sentence was revised and new references were added.

Page 3

Line 21: Replace the word teenagers with young people. The latter is broader.

- It was corrected.

Lines 23, 26, 28, 31 and 38: Replace the word sexual with sexuality.

- It was corrected.

Line 56: Use lower case for the word parental.

We deleted this reference.
Line 8: Replace the phrase ‘for their sexual issues’ with the phrase ‘on issues relating to sexuality’.

-It was corrected.

Line 13: Replace the words ‘researchs are’ with the words ‘research is’.

-It was corrected.

Line 21: Change the word adolescents with the word adolescents’. Change the word another with the words ‘a follow up’.

-It was corrected.

Line 28: Change the word limited with the words ‘a small number’.

-It was corrected.

Line 38: Replace the word was with the word is.

-It was corrected.

Line 41: Replace the word more with the word greater. Replace the words ‘that along’ with the words ‘to keep up’.

-It was corrected.

Reviewer #1 comments:

The paper is extremely interested and important, since it provides concrete recommendations for sexuality education programming and implementation in conservative environment of the I.R. of Iran.

this is important, that paper confirms, that fear of emotional and sexual harms exists among parents in Iran. Existing data tells us that approximately 20% of women, and between 5 and 10% of men, reported having been victims of sexual violence as children. WHO says that violence among young people, including dating violence is also a major problem. Since parents in Iran understand and accept this problem, it could be an entry point for involvement parents into sexuality education. Parents or guardians have a significant role in educating their children
about sexuality. For Iran, where sexuality education is not provided in schools, parents/guardians and families bear most of the responsibility for providing it to their children. But parents often lack the competencies to do so, and results of this research confirm it for Iran as well. From other sources we know, that parent-focused interventions were found to be particularly effective, and many had positive effects on the young people's knowledge and attitudes and on their sexual behaviours, although the latter was inconsistent (though most of the researched up to date were conducted in the USA). In this regard it's important to know, that parents in Iran are dissatisfied with their lack of communication skills, that provides us with the evidence to implement sexuality education training for parents themselves. Additionally, parent-child communication may be especially important for condom use: research has found that parent-child discussions about condoms prior to sexual debut are beneficial and that condom use at first intercourse has been associated with a 20-fold increase in rates of continued regular condom use. Obvious, in Iran condom use can't be discussed at school at all, so parents could become a good source of information on it for their kids.

The paper flags necessity of training for teachers, that is crucial, since teachers are central to implement sexuality education. Teachers must be supported by a legal framework, as well as being trained and have access to training materials.

Technology can reduce common barriers to participation in group-based, multisession programmes, they can also allow for individualized and tailored messages and active learning. The impacts of technological advances and social media can also be seen in the way young people are accessing the Internet, and 'sex', 'sexuality' and 'how to have sex' have emerged as popular search terms. In the absence of accessible sexuality programmes, alternatives to the Internet are few. The potential uses of technology in contributing to the delivery of sexuality education are generating significant interest, especially because many young people are already confident and frequent users of technology. Most experts believe that technology has the potential to transform the delivery of both education and health. The use of technology in sexuality education is at the crossroads of mHealth, which is the use of mobile and wireless technologies to support the achievement of health objectives, and electronic learning or e-learning, which is all types of training, education and instruction via a digital medium, such as a computer or mobile phone. Online education is when the learner connects to instruction and educational materials using the Internet. While the use of technology in sexuality education is often demand-driven, such as a response to a question posted by someone or a search for information about something the user wants to know, it can also provide structured programmes or components of programmes.

Authors referred to UNESCO guidance on sexuality education from 2009. However, this Guidance was revised and launched in 2018, and endorsed by 6 UN agencies - Revised UN ITGSE. I would strongly recommend to use language from this Guidance, which provides state of the art understanding of sexuality education, which is much more broader and comprehensive definition than "sexual health education". Or it's better to use "culture-appropriate" language, rather than "culture-based".
One of the main characteristics of successful implementation of sexuality education is meaningful youth participation. It would be interesting to know parents opinion about equal involvement of their children into sexuality education implementation.

Also it looks interesting for me to see discussion of differences in answers from mothers and fathers. Also interviews were conducted with 16 parents (9 women, 7 men) - does it mean female and male parents interviewed were not necessarily from the same families? Also should be clarified one more sentence - "we initially selected key informant parents...": does it mean that two school principals, one school teacher, one counselor and one nurse were among interviews parents? If so, 5 of 16 parents represented school's staff, that limits perceptions from parents.

One more thing to recommend from my side is to do a proof-reading once again. For example to say that parents need "to improve sexual communication with their adolescents" sounds very awkward and ambiguous.

-We revised all the manuscript carefully and also edited it based on editor comments.

- We deleted the reference UNESCO 2009 and matched the referred sentences with the last version as follows: Montgomery P, Knerr W. Review of the Evidence on Sexuality Education. Report to inform the update of the UNESCO International technical guidance on sexuality education. Paris: UNESCO; 2018. Available at: https://www.icmec.org/wp-

- We replaced the word "culture-based" with the word "culture-appropriate"

-You are exactly right. They discussed the necessity of involving schools in sexuality health education, absence of sexuality health education in schools, and educations being limited to scientific lessons.

-Female and male parents how were interviewed were not from the same families

-Total sample of parents was 16 without key informants. We initially selected the school principals (were not in parent samples) to introduce eligible informant parents for interviewing if possible.

In recruitment process, we interviewed with 3 parents of adolescents and they said that they were a teacher (employed), or nurse (not-employed) or counselor (not employed).

Line 27: This section revised as follows: The participants consisted of 16 parents (9 mothers and 7 fathers) that were recruited based on purposeful sampling. Different perceptions from parents were achieved with maximum variation strategy in terms of gender, age, education, occupation, marital status, economic status, number of children, adolescent’s age, and residency region.

We revised all the manuscript carefully and also edited it based on editor comments and also we revised this section as follows: The results highlighted that the parents are dissatisfied with their lack of information and communication skills in sex-related issues as well as, limited access to training resources.