Author’s response to reviews

Title: A study on the implementation fidelity of the performance-based financing policy in Burkina Faso after 12 months

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We would like to thank the reviewer for thorough reading of this manuscript. We have taken into account the comments and suggestions made. Kindly find our responses below.

Comments (C) and responses (R):

C1: P3, Line 12: I wouldn't say limited as it seems there hasn't been any research. Maybe use 'unsatisfying', 'lacking', 'deficient', 'inadequate'...to really understand how PBF works something like that?

R1: We have followed your recommendation and used the word “lacking” instead of “limited”.

C2: P3, Line 16 : Better and more recent references exist. Don't use the toolkit as a reference for a study. The following studies are more recent and more appropriate to refer to and make the point, I'm sure there are also studies from 2016 that can be included:

The effect of performance-based financing on maternal healthcare use in Burundi: a two-wave pooled cross-sectional analysis
Performance-based financing to increase utilization of maternal health services: Evidence from Burkina Faso

R2: Thank you for your suggestion. It has been considered and changes have been made to use more appropriate references.

C3: p3, Line 17-20: Typo? "more theoretical and qualitative…” what?

R3: Actually, there is no typo here. But we have made our point clear and rephrased as follows: “More research is still needed to understand the ‘how and why’ (3) of these effects”

C4: P3, Line 22-25: "Very few" is probably too strong, as you give 7 references immediately after it. Maybe it is better to be more specific: "Very few systematically investigate the implementation fidelity of PBF". Are all the references given studying the implementation fidelity or the effects of the implementation.

R4: Thank you for your suggestion. We have rephrased as advised as follows “In fact, very few studies have systematically investigated the implementation of PBF”.

C5: p3, line 39: typo: "hen" => "hence"

R5: The correction has been made.

C6: p3, line 34-44: break down sentence in two sentences

R6: Thank you for flagging this. We have now split our idea in two sentences, as follows “In addition to contributing actively to continuous improvement of the intervention, this facilitates the interpretation of an intervention’s implementation and its results. Hence, it strengthens its internal validity and helps avoid Type III errors in evaluation that would lead to mistakenly attributing a lack of effects to the intervention itself without considering the quality of its implementation.”

C7: P9, Line 22: typo: "we observed that of the majority of the intervention components were implemented with fidelity" => remove first 'of'

R7: The correction has been made.
R8: The sentence has been revised as the use of ‘on the other hand’ expressed a link between the two sentences that doesn’t exist. We have rephrased as follows: “Furthermore, health centers encountered certain difficulties in reinforcing their performance improvement plans.”