Author’s response to reviews

Title: Estimating levels of HIV testing coverage and use in Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission among Women of Reproductive age in Zambia

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Responses to Reviewers comments

Thank you very much for your insightful comments. Kindly find below the responses.

>>Comment:

I would suggest authors include this information as a clarification in parenthesis in line 148, of the methods section, after "(...) preceding the survey including HIV testing (through dried blood sample collection and testing for the women eligible for the interview)."

Response:

We have added this in line 148 under methods section- (through dried blood sample collection and testing for the women eligible for the interview)."

>>Comment:

As most PMTCT programs will include ANC and most ANC protocols will include HIV testing at some point of the pregnancy, I will suggest the authors addressing the general characteristics of the PMTCT programs/packages in page 3, line 82, previous to introducing the concept of PMTCT cascade regarding HIV testing and ARV prophylaxis to baby, etc.
Response:

We have added this in line 82-“The consolidated guidelines for treatment and prevention of HIV infection in the PMTCT Program demands that medical practitioners adhere closely to the ANC protocol for better outcomes. The PMTCT package includes interventions provided to women during pregnancy such as maternal education, Prevention and treatment of STIs, Malaria (IPT), ultra-sound scans for foetal defect detection and HIV testing, prevention and treatment.”

>>Comment:

Please, substitute the word "Optimal" by "Higher" or "The highest", in page 11, line 238; as the "optimality" concept is always related to a current standard that, in this case, would probably be to attempt having near one hundred per cent coverage of the women in reproductive age.

Response:

We have substituted the word “Optimal” by “Higher” in line 238. Now in line 244.

>>Comment:

Please, include the use of statistical significance a step-wise multivariable regression as criteria for variable selection in the final model in the Statistical Analysis, in the Methods section on page 6, lines 170 to 173.

Response:

We have included- “Furthermore, in the statistical analysis, a step-wise multivariable regression was used as criteria for variable selection in the final model” in line 171-172.

>>Comment:

Please, remove the remaining superscript (b) in Table 4 p-value; and add it to tables 2 and 3 where this end-note would be considered appropriate.

Response:

We have removed superscript (b) in table 4.
Finally, some minor comments on the use of acronyms and written English could be improved in order to enhance the readability of the manuscript but I let the revision of those comments to the criteria of the authors as they should not impede the publication of the manuscript after comments above are properly addressed.

Response:

We have read through entire manuscript to ensure all acronyms and grammatical errors are addressed.

Thank you.