Author’s response to reviews

Title: BabyGel Pilot: a pilot cluster randomised trial of the provision of alcohol handgel to postpartum mothers to prevent neonatal and young infant Infection-related morbidity in the community

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PAFS-D-17-00197R3 - Response to reviews

BabyGel Pilot: a pilot cluster randomised trial of the provision of alcohol handgel to postpartum mothers to prevent neonatal and young infant infective morbidity in the community.

James Ditai; Julian Abeso; Nathan Mackayi Odeke; Natalie Mobbs; John Dusabe-Richards; Macreen Mudoola; Enitan D Carrol; Peter Olupot-Olupot; Julie Storr; Antonieta Medina-Lara; Melissa Gladstone; Brian E Faragher; Andrew David Weeks.
Dear Dr Melson,

Kindly find below our response to the comments by associate editor for the manuscript "BabyGel Pilot: a pilot cluster randomised trial of the provision of alcohol handgel to postpartum mothers to prevent neonatal and young infant infective morbidity in the community." (PAFS-D-17-00197R3).

Associate editor comments

Thank you for your ongoing interest in publishing this interesting and valuable research manuscript in Pilot and Feasibility Studies. My report can be found below. Please note that while some of the items are relatively minor when taken individually, in sum they represent a more significant issue to do with comprehension and the need for careful editing of the whole manuscript. The report is also not exhaustive in the aspects of the manuscript which require editing and should therefore be interpreted as indicative of issues to attend to in any revision. To ensure that a final revised version of the manuscript can be published in Pilot and Feasibility Studies, I would strongly encourage all study authors to review and/or contribute to the final revised version of the manuscript so as to draw on the collective experience of the team.

Thank-you. We reviewed and contributed to the final revised version of the manuscript and see the revised version attached.

1. Please write numbers less than 10/ten as text, unless they start the sentence. Where numbers are written in text please remove the numerical figure included in parentheses (e.g., Page 8 line 31 ‘three (03)’ as the written text is sufficient. Please review the manuscript for all instances of similar redundancy of text and numerical figures.

We have written all numbers less than 10 as text and rectified the redundancy in our manuscript.

2. Avoid joining text and numbers using hyphens, unless necessary, as this changes the meaning of the text. For example ‘...2-interventions...’ or ‘...1-before touching the baby...’. This is a consistent feature of the manuscript so please review and correct throughout.

We have corrected this in our manuscript.
3. Avoid capitalising words mid-sentence. For example, page 5 line 8 (‘Globally, 45% of In children…’). This is a consistent feature of the manuscript so please review and correct throughout.

Thank you. We have had this corrected in our manuscript.

4. Sentences should function as standalone statements, but there are many instances where this isn’t the case e.g. (in primary outcome section: ‘Though they found challenges in taking temperature, counting respiratory rate and pulse rate. The VHWs made the judgment of high temperature…’ or (Discussion) ‘Though the expert children encouraged the use of the ABHR by anyone handling the baby and reminded the mother to take the baby to the health facility for immunization and in the event of infant fever or any other concerns. There is not enough evidence in…’.

Thank you. We have rephrased all such statements into standalone statements in our manuscript.

5. Correct instances of ‘&’ to ‘and’ throughout.

We have corrected all such instances in our manuscript.

Introduction

6. P5 line 12. Please remove ‘one’

We have removed one.

7. P7 lines 42-47. The sentence describing other published findings from the BabyGel pilot is confusing (‘…in this study…’) as this could mean the study reported in this manuscript. Please rephrase this sentence.

Thank. This sentence has been rephrased in our manuscript.
8. P7 aim 6: The acceptability criterion is described as ‘seeking control sites…’ which sounds as though it was part of the eligibility criteria rather than evaluation of contamination between included villages.

Thank you. We have amended this to reflect the contamination set or agreed criterion

Methods

9. Study setting. Please review and correct this section. Numbers are repeated and some contradict each other. This makes it very difficult to understand and assess.

We have rephrased this section in our manuscript.

10. Page 8 line 32. Please remove repetition of ‘three’.

Thank you. We have removed it.

11. Page 8 line 33-34. Is ‘four’ an error?

Four is not an error. Our health care system is arranged in levels from level one to level seven


We have capitalized ‘figure 2’ and ‘figure 5’ accordingly.

13. Page 8 lines 48-49. It is unclear why the period of prior recruitment is relevant here.

We agree. There is no unique relevance of the period prior recruitment.
Interventions


We have removed all the names of the villages in the manuscript.

15. P 9-10. The description of the ABHR intervention remains unclear. The text describing the three moments for community neonatal hand hygiene requires editing to remove repetition of text and accurate enclosure of additional information within parentheses. In the following paragraph the description of the instructions on the use of ABHR provided by the midwife includes (i) the time period ABHR should be used (ii) performing a whole body wipe of the infant (iii) encourage carers/others to use ABHR before touching the infant. This doesn’t match the three images/descriptions on the poster. It is unclear whether these midwife instructions were provided in addition to a basic description of the poster or whether they were provided in addition to the description of the three moments depicted on the poster.

We have rephrased, amended this section to describe the intervention succinctly in our manuscript.

Results

16. Please format so that each aim/heading is set at an equivalent level.

Thank-you. We have formatted to an equivalent level

17. Follow-up outcomes. Please use a footnote or parentheses to provide additional information instead of ‘49*’.

Thank-you. We have inserted a foot note
18. As per previous requests, please number tables sequentially. Table 4 is referred to before Table 3.

Thank-you. We have numbered these tables sequentially

19. Neonatal infection rate. The written text (majority) and data don’t agree: ‘Majority of women reported that their babies had suffered infections (control 39.6%, 19/48 compared to intervention 51.0%, 26/51).

Thank-you. We have amended the text

20. Please provide some additional description of the changes to the follow-up visit schedule. The text provided isn’t clear what this involved and whether the change was substantial.

Thank-you. We have rephrased this sentence.

21. Discussion. The final sentences discussing expert children requires editing.

Thank-you. We have edited this sentence

22. Limitations. Please review and edit this new section. The points appear valid but the writing style and tone is too casual. For example, ‘…we can’t use this data…’ or ‘…carers just poured…’.

Thank-you. We have reviewed and edited this section

23. Conclusion. Please review and edit this section. Some of the statements are not grammatically correct.

Thank-you. We have reviewed and edited this section
Author contributions

24. Please ensure that the author contribution initials match the authorship for Medina-Lara and Mobbs.

Thank-you. Appropriate author initials have been included


Thank-you. We have amended this sentence.