

## **Author's response to reviews**

**Title:** Adolescent and adult first time mothers' health seeking practices during pregnancy and early motherhood in Wakiso district, central Uganda

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**Author's response to reviews:** see over

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**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

Department of Community Health and Behavioural Sciences

Your ref.

Our ref.

**Date:** Wednesday, 19 November 2008

**To:** Prof. Regina Kulier, Ph.D.  
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Dear Editors-in-Chief,

**Re: MS 1730051766221206 Adolescent and adult first time mothers' health seeking practices during pregnancy and early motherhood in Wakiso district, central Uganda**

We are very grateful to you for offering us the opportunity to revise our manuscript as per comments and resubmit it to your prestigious Journal 'Reproductive Health'. I believe we have been able to address all the relevant issues; however we would be very willing to consider further revisions if you think appropriate.

Please find attached response to each of the comments. As requested by one of the reviewers, we have uploaded the entire questionnaire but note that not all the questions were analysed for this article!

If I can provide any further information that would be helpful, please let me know.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Yours faithfully,

Lynn Atuyambe, MPH (Corresponding author)

## **Reviewer's report I**

**Date:** 14 October 2008

**Comment 1:** This is an interesting piece of work that contributes to the understanding of the burden of a pregnancy during adolescence in Africa.

**Response:** Thank you for the compliment.

**Comment 2:** Title: consider shortening

**Response:** We have re-examined the title and we have not made any adjustment. We think that by shortening it further, we may lose important information for our readers.

**Comment 3:** Background: In the second paragraph, please consider revising the sentence "one problem in sub-Saharan Africa is ...". Perhaps, it would be more appropriate to state: "In sub-Saharan Africa, even where services are available, many pregnant women..."

**Response:** Thank you for your advice. We have adopted the phrase by starting the sentence as suggested.

**Comment 4:** In the third paragraph, please provide a specific reference to the sentence "Maternal and neonatal conditions contribute 20 percent..." The reference cited - 16 - may be more related to the Uganda's National HSSP II.

**Response:** We have decided to delete the sentence as it appears confusing. This information seem to have been extracted from the routinely collected 'health information system' national data base and was from included the HSSP II (2005).

**Comment 5:** Methods: Please use consistently the term multi-stage (or multistage). Please provide a reference to the sampling techniques. Two data entry software are cited (EPED and EPIDATA) with no references (please provide details similarly to STATA).

**Response:** Thank you for the observation. We have now used 'multi-stage' consistently in the revised manuscript. In addition, a reference for the sampling technique used has been added. We used EPIDATA software for data entry and we have added the following references for EPIDATA and STATA

### EPIDATA

Lauritsen JM. (Ed.) EpiData Data Entry, Data Management and basic Statistical Analysis System. V3.1 Odense Denmark, EpiData Association, 2000-2008. [Http://www.epidata.dk](http://www.epidata.dk). Viewed on 01-01-2007.

### STATA

STATA Corp LP. 2008. Data analysis and statistical software V.8.2. <http://stata.com/> viewed on 01-01-2007.

**Comment 6:** As regards to the questionnaire, further details should be provided and the questionnaire itself could be presented as annex. Concerning to the "self and community perception" of inappropriate dressing, additional details should be provided.

**Response:** We have uploaded the questionnaire for your information but we think it is too big to be part of the article. Besides, we have made clarification of this concept "inappropriate dressing" in footnote 6 by adding the phrase "... - dress no longer fitting due to pregnancy"

**Comment 7: RESULTS:** In general, the authors should avoid presenting in the text the same data provided in the tables. However, when doing so, the use of decimals should be consistent (if presenting in the table the age as 17.9 years, this is the figure that should be presented in the text).

**Response:** Thank you for the comment. However, here I don't agree. In text, figures are rounded up for ease of reading.

**Comment 8:** Both in the text and in the table, the information on education attainment should be evaluated considering the effect of age. Adolescents may...

**Response:** Thanks for this observation. We have revised and included a statement that "the difference could have been due to the age difference".

**Comment 9:** As regards to the school dropout, the better would be to consider only those who were studying at the beginning of the pregnancy.

**Response:** Thanks a lot for the comment. In the revised submission, we have put footnote 9 stating that "For only those who had been to school"

**Comment 10:** The caesarean section rate can be a useful indicator of process. Is this information available? If yes, please provide.

**Response:** This information was not collected and therefore is not available

**Comment 11: DISCUSSION:** In this section the authors should avoid repeating unnecessarily the data provided in the results section. My suggestion is to keep the repetition at the minimum essential, please revise accordingly.

**Response:** We have revised the discussion and have now tried to remove unnecessary repetition of the data in discussion.

**Comment 12:** The last sentence of second paragraph is an inference that should be better supported by the evidence or the findings. Perhaps, if the authors change to "This may imply that sexual education is still lacking..." the sentence will be more acceptable.

**Response:** We have taken reviewers advice and made adjustment in the sentence structure as proposed.

**Comment 13:** In the sixth paragraph, the authors suggest that the increase in the delivery assistance by skilled professionals could be partially attributed to the existence of an extensive social network in the community towards the onset of labour. I am wondering whether this network would not be already active before.

**Response:** Thanks for this observation. On close scrutiny we now think that is not an appropriate explanation and thus we have deleted the sentence.

**Comment 14: FIGURE:** needs revision. There in the right hand side of the figure, there is some missing text. My suggestion is to change this figure to a classical flowchart.

**Response:** We have taken the reviewers advice and changed the figure to a classical chart.

**Comment 15: TABLES:** The position of the Yes and No categories (top/bottom) should be consistent among the tables.

**Response:** We agree and we have made the Yes and No positions consistent among all the tables.

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## **Reviewer's report II**

**Date:** 22 October 2008

**Comment 1:** General Comments: The introduction nicely sets up the importance of understanding first-time adolescent mothers' health seeking behaviours in Uganda. Sampling methods were described well and data quality assurance appears to be well done. The results are clear and straightforward. Overall, I feel this manuscript provides critical information needed for informing potential interventions targeting adolescent mothers and, ultimately, positively influencing maternal and child health in central Uganda.

**Response:** Thank for this affirmative comment

**Comment 2:** Section on "methods and procedure of data collection" appears to describe more of the training involved for interviewers. More detail is needed describing how actual interviews with participants were conducted, where interviews took place, how long the interviews lasted, etc.

**Response:** Thanks for this observation; we have now given details of how interviews were conducted, where they took place and how long they lasted in our revised version

**Comment 2:** I would be cautious in using the term "social support" to describe or classify the challenges faced by adolescents ...

**Response:** We appreciate this comment and we have given operational meaning in footnote 8

**Comment 3:** The issue of early sexual education is, of course, important and is worth mentioning; however, closing remarks should primarily focus on implications or conclusions which can be derived from the data/sample, i.e., related to first-time adolescent mothers. The very last two sentences in "Conclusions" seemed to have lost this focus. I would suggest either moving the last two sentences somewhere else or removing all together.

**Response:** We have carefully checked and the last two sentences in conclusion are supported by that data in table 1. This data suggests that pregnant adolescents were nearly twice likely not to complete primary school (OR=1.98, 95%CI: 1.36-2.89). However we have made adjustment in the two sentences.

**Comment 4:** Minor grammatical and punctuation errors should be corrected throughout manuscript.

**Response:** We have checked and corrected the minor grammatical and punctuation errors

Discretionary Revisions:

**Comment 5:** Be careful not to overly repeat results in the discussion section.

**Response:** Thank you. We have checked the discussion and made minor adjustments

**Comment 6:** The label in the tables next to OR which reads "odds among adolescent mothers are divided by odds among adult mothers" is unnecessary. At first glance, one may think something else is being calculated other than a standard odds ratio.

**Response:** We note that the structure of the tables is not the usual one. However we have revised all tables by deleting the symbol but left the label below the table as an N.B. (Nota Bene)

**Comment 7:** I recommend describing some limitations of the study/data, since it may be helpful to others for improving, if they wish to replicate or conduct a similar study.

**Response:** Thanks for this very helpful comment; we have now included limitations of the study (the paragraph before the conclusions)