

Author's response to reviews

Title: Maternal health in resource-poor urban settings: How does women's autonomy influence the utilization of obstetric care services?

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over

April 23, 2009

Editor-in-Chief,
Reproductive Health Journal

Dear Editor,

In response to your email of March 25, 2009, we are pleased to submit a revised version of the above mentioned manuscript.

We appreciate the constructive comments and recommendations made by the two referees; they were very helpful in improving the manuscript to the benefit of readers of *Reproductive Health*. We have responded to all comments and recommendations as I describe below, highlighting each of the points raised by the referees and how we have addressed them in our response. We have also made further editorial changes to the paper

1. Issues raised by Reviewer 1 (Mari-a Yolanda Makuch)

Comments: *The selection of the women who were interviewed poses many questions. Were the 1927 women interviewed all the women who had pregnancy outcomes in 2004-2005 in the research settings? There were no women who refused to be interviewed? There were no women that researchers were unable to contact? How were these women contacted for interview? The selection process needs to be described in more detail. Also there is no reference to approval by an Ethical Committee or of use of informed consent, it is recommended to include information on these issues.*

Response: We thank the reviewer for these comments and suggestions, which have been all taken into account in the Data section (page 3-4). It now spell out the number of eligible women (2,482), and indicates that the 555 missing women had either out-migrated from the study area or were absent during the survey. We also mention that *written informed consent was read to respondents before the interview*, and that *ethical approval for the study was sought from the Kenya Medical Research Institute*.

Comments: *Removal of the last paragraph of the Introduction section.*

Response: The Instructions for Reproductive Health authors request that the background section should “*end with a very brief statement of what is being reported in the article*” (<http://www.reproductive-health-journal.com/info/instructions/>). We have however removed the paragraph as per the suggestion made by both Reviewer 1 and Reviewer 2. Guidance from the Editorial team is very much welcome.

Comments: *Use the first column for N and the second for % in Table 2.*

Response: This has been addressed (see revised Table 2).

2. Issues raised by Reviewer 2 (Martin Bobak)

Comments: *Add either confidence intervals or standard errors to the tables of the regression coefficients. Formatting of tables in a word processor*

Response: We welcome this comment. We have included standard errors in all relevant tables (Tables 3-4 and Appendix 1). Regarding the formatting of tables in a word processor, the Instructions for Reproductive Health authors request that “*Tabular data be uploaded as an Excel spreadsheet (.xls) or comma separated values (.csv)*”. Our understanding is that the Journal will make the necessary conversion while generating the PDF file.

Comments: *Removal of the last paragraph of the Introduction section.*

Response: We thank the Reviewer for this suggestion that was also made by the other Reviewer. As mentioned above, we have removed the paragraph though the Instructions for Reproductive Health authors request that the background section should “*end with a very brief statement of what is being reported in the article*” (<http://www.reproductive-health-journal.com/info/instructions/>).

3. Other changes made on the paper

We have incorporated other editorial revisions. Importantly, where applicable we have included in the tables a footnote to explain the abbreviation HF (Health Facility); and replaced the “--” with “Same” and included a footnote that reads: *Estimates for Appropriate HF vs (Inappropriate or not HF) are the same as for All types of HF vs Not HF.*

I believe that I have been fully responsive to the reviewers’ comments and that the revised manuscript is now acceptable for publication. We look forward to receiving your editorial decision at your earliest convenience.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

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