

Author's response to reviews

Title: Assessing Health Systems for Type 1 Diabetes in sub-Saharan Africa: Developing a 'Rapid Assessment Protocol for Insulin Access'

Authors:

David Beran (david.beran@access2insulin.org)
John S Yudkin (j.yudkin@ucl.ac.uk)
Maximilian de Courten (maxdecourten@mac.com)

Version: 2 Date: 28 November 2005

Author's response to reviews:

To the Editor:

We would like to thank you for the chance to respond to the very valid comments put forth by the two reviewers of our paper entitled "Assessing Health System for Insulin-Requiring Diabetes in sub-Saharan Africa: Developing a 'Rapid Assessment Protocol for Insulin Access'".

In addressing the first reviewer's comments, the title of the article was changed from insulin-requiring to Type 1 diabetes. This was done as the section explaining this was removed as suggested by this reviewer. The use of the more common term of Type 1 diabetes is used to make the article clearer for non-diabetes specialists. The "Background" section of the paper has also been modified to include the suggestions made and an estimate of the number of people with Type 1 diabetes was added. (Reviewer 1, points 1 and 2)

The Design, RAPIA Protocol and Implementation of the RAPIA sections have been re-written and the different concerns from the first reviewer's comments addressed. A table showing the number of interviews has also been included. (Reviewer 1 points 3 and 4, Reviewer 2, point 4) The findings from the RAPIA in Mali, Mozambique and Zambia are not included as they have been published elsewhere and the main aim of this paper is to focus on the methodology.

The reference suggested by the Reviewer has been added. (Reviewer 1, point 5)

With regards to the second reviewer's comments, to the authors' knowledge this is the first attempt to use Rapid Assessment Methodology to assess a health system's availability to address the problem of diabetes in developing countries. Hopkinson et al. 2004 Int J Health Plann and Manage use a similar tool in Kyrgyzstan, but the methodology is not described. Other tools looking at health systems do not take a systematic or disease specific approach. It was also felt that the authors' addressed the issue of thematic areas in the different sections of the paper adequately. (Reviewer 2, point 1)

References 13-15 were the only ones used as the basis for the development of the RAPIA. (Reviewer 2, point 2)

A section on the limitations of the RAPIA has been added as suggested by the second Reviewer. (Reviewer 2, point 3) In addition the second Reviewer's comment on facilitating change has been addressed in the main text and Discussion section of the paper.

We thank the Reviewers for their extremely pertinent comments and suggestions, and hope that this paper is now satisfactory for publication with BioMed Central.

Yours sincerely,

David Beran, on behalf of the authors