Author's response to reviews

Title: Symptomatic presentation with cervical cancer in Uganda: a qualitative study assessing the pathways to diagnosis in a low-income country

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Version: 2 Date: 3 July 2014

Author's response to reviews:

July 3, 2014
The Editor
BMC Women’s Health
BioMed Central

Dear Editor,

Symptomatic presentation with cervical cancer in Uganda: a qualitative study assessing the pathways to diagnosis in a low-income country

Please find attached our paper entitled “Symptomatic presentation with cervical cancer in Uganda: a qualitative study assessing the pathways to diagnosis in a low-income country”, for consideration for publication in BMC Women’s Health.

We are glad to transfer this manuscript from BMC Family Practice to BMC Women’s Health upon the kind advice from the Editorial Team. We wish to further state the following.

Cervical cancer is the most common cancer among women in Uganda and in most of sub Saharan African countries. Most of the cervical cancer patients in these countries are diagnosed when in late stage and the reasons for long help-seeking intervals and/or diagnostic intervals leading to late stage diagnosis are not clearly known.

We chose to use a qualitative approach first in order to understand the complexity of the patient journey to diagnosis and treatment. Findings from this study will then inform quantitative studies to determine magnitudes and correlations between patient demographics and care process variables such as patient intervals and diagnostic intervals with stage of cervical cancer at diagnosis.

This study explored the process of symptom appraisal and help-seeking for symptoms of cervical cancer in Uganda using the Model of Pathways to
Treatment as a framework for analysis. The main goal is to gain insights and understanding of the care seeking process and the factors that act to promote and/or inhibit early help-seeking in order to inform policies to promote cervical cancer early detection.

We hope that you will find our paper a valuable addition to knowledge in this field of help-seeking and early detection of cancers particularly for the low- and middle-income countries where care systems are not prepared for chronic diseases like cancers. We equally anticipate that our findings will attract interests of readers of BMC Women’s Health, provide useful information for design of further researches in this field as well as guide policy for health promotion for down-staging and early detection of cervical cancer.

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All authors have approved the manuscript and agree with its submission to BMC Women’s Health. We declare no conflict of interest and also declare that this manuscript has not been published elsewhere and is not under consideration by another journal.

We look forward to your positive considerations of our manuscript.

Yours Sincerely,

Amos Deogratius Mwaka