

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Men care too: a qualitative study examining women's perceptions of fathers' engagement in early childhood development (ECD) during an ECD program for HIV-positive mothers in Malawi
AUTHORS	Temelkovska, Tijana; Kalande, Pericles; Udedi, Evelyn; Bruns, Laurie; Mulungu, Siyenunu; Hubbard, Julie; Gupta, Sundeep; Richter, Linda; Coates, Thomas; Dovel, Kathryn

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Ugwuanyi, Christian S. University of the Free State, School of Education Studies
REVIEW RETURNED	06-Nov-2021

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>This is an interesting manuscript that has good contributions to ECD research. However, I have some issues with the manuscript which need to be handled properly.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the end of your background information, you should try as much as possible to state the study objectives and research questions 2. Method: Your method section is not detailed. You will need to have subheadings like research approach and design of the study, participants selection, data collection instrument, trustworthiness of the instrument, data collection procedure, ethical statement and data analysis procedure. Each of those subheadings must be clearly described for the sake of replication of this study. Currently, some of the subheadings are missing in your write-up. 3. Check your language properly. eg the sentence For this paper, we only include interviews with women who report that the father of their youngest child was present in the child's daily life (since absent fathers will not be exposed to ECD sessions nor will they have a chance to practice ECD activities with the child). under data analysis is dramatically wrong. Revisit it accordingly. 4. You will need to paraphrase the entire manuscript to reduce similarity with other published works. 5. Finally, there is a need to update the currency of the literature used for the study. Try and include recent publications from 2016 to 2021 possibly.
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REVIEWER	Silva, Elisabete Pereira Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Materno-Infantil
REVIEW RETURNED	26-Dec-2021

GENERAL COMMENTS	TITLE
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It is adequately described.

ABSTRACT

It is well structured and written in a concise and easy-to-read form. However, it was not clear the purpose of the study.

INTRODUCTION

It presents the study problem in a concise and well-structured manner, placing the significance of the study on the basis of relevant literature. I suggest putting the study objectives more clearly.

METHODS

The Methods describe the Intervention and the interviews. It needs to be clear what the objectives of the study are. Was it the Intervention or was it the assessment of the Intervention through interviews?

I missed the theory behind the data analysis. What is described is the operational method and not what the authors were based on in arriving at the results.

I suggest describing deductive and inductive coding more clearly for this study.

The characteristics of the researchers who carried out the interviews were not mentioned.

I suggest further clarifying how the sample size was determined.

RESULTS

The results are well organized and presented. I only suggest adjusting the subtitle of Table 1

Table 1. Respondent demographic characteristics	
Variables (N=22)	Participants n / %

DISCUSSION

It is well structured, dialogues the results with the previously published literature.

	<p style="text-align: center;">REFERENCES</p> <p>On page 12, reference 22, wouldn't it be 23?</p> <p>I did not find reference 27 from the reference list in the text of the manuscript.</p>
REVIEWER	Nair, Sapna LEAD KREA University, India
REVIEW RETURNED	10-Mar-2022
GENERAL COMMENTS	Please add description of participant consent procedures followed

VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer: 1

Dr. Christian S. Ugwuanyi, University of the Free State

Comments to the Author:

This is an interesting manuscript that has good contributions to ECD research. However, I have some issues with the manuscript which need to be handled properly.

1. At the end of your background information, you should try as much as possible to state the study objectives and research questions

- Lines 22-28: The study objectives are more clearly stated in the “Objectives” section of the updated abstract.
- Lines 135-141: In this final paragraph of the introduction/ background section, we included the objectives of the study and questions regarding male caregiver involvement in early childhood development that we aimed to explore with this qualitative study.

2. Method: Your method section is not detailed. You will need to have subheadings like research approach and design of the study, participants selection, data collection instrument, trustworthiness of the instrument, data collection procedure, ethical statement and data analysis procedure. Each of those subheadings must be clearly described for the sake of replication of this study. Currently, some of the subheadings are missing in your write-up.

- Lines 173-181: “Study design” subheading and description was added
- Lines 183-191: “Participant selection” subheading and description was added
- Lines 193-202: “Interview guide” subheading was added with a description encompassing both a description of the instrument and the validation of the instrument
- Lines 236-239: The “Ethical Approval” section describes the approval process and lists the IRB approval numbers for both the University of California Los Angeles IRB and the National Health Sciences Review Committee of Malawi.
- Lines 213-230: Further detail describing data analysis procedures was added to the “Data Analysis” section

3. Check your language properly. eg the sentence. For this paper, we only

include interviews with women who report that the father of their youngest child was present in the child's daily life (since absent fathers will not be exposed to ECD sessions nor will they have a chance to practice ECD activities with the child). under data analysis is dramatically wrong. Revisit it accordingly.

- Lines 216-218: This statement was edited for clarity to highlight that we only included interviews with mothers that had present male partners in the analysis. Fathers who were not present and active in the mother/child's life (absent fathers) would not have had an opportunity to be involved in the ECD sessions or be exposed to these lessons; thus, the interview questions (i.e. regarding fathers' opinions of the program) would not have applied.

4. You will need to paraphrase the entire manuscript to reduce similarity with other published works.

- Thank you for the feedback. We reviewed each line of the manuscript carefully to ensure originality of this work and appropriate citations, where applicable.

5. Finally, there is a need to update the currency of the literature used for the study. Try and include recent publications from 2016 to 2021 possibly.

- We reviewed the current literature and included additional information and citations, where possible, particularly in the Introduction and Discussion sections. Out of 36 total references in this manuscript, 21 are now from between 2016-2022. Notably, in recent years there is still a relative lack of research into father involvement in ECD programs, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, highlighting the importance of additional scholarship investigating these topics.

Reviewer: 2

Dr. Elisabete Pereira Silva, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco

Comments to the Author:

ABSTRACT It is well structured and written in a concise and easy-to-read form. However, it was not clear the purpose of the study.

- Lines 22-28: The aims and purpose of the study were added to the updated abstract under the "Objectives" subheading.

INTRODUCTION It presents the study problem in a concise and well-structured manner, placing the significance of the study on the basis of relevant literature. I suggest putting the study objectives more clearly.

- Lines 135-141: Study objectives were stated more clearly in the final paragraph of the Introduction section.

METHODS The Methods describe the Intervention and the interviews. It needs to be clear what the objectives of the study are. Was it the Intervention or was it the assessment of the Intervention through interviews? I missed the theory behind the data analysis. What is described is the operational method and not what the authors were based on in arriving at the results. I suggest describing deductive and inductive coding more clearly for this study. The characteristics of the researchers who carried out the interviews were not mentioned. I suggest further clarifying how the sample size was determined.

- Lines 143-146: The study objectives were clarified prior to any further description of the methods of the study.
- Lines 218-222: Deductive and inductive coding approaches were described more clearly.
- Line 208: A description of the researcher who conducted interviews was included
- Lines 187-191: A description of the sample size determination was provided. It was additionally noted in Line 207 that data collection was stopped when thematic saturation was reached.

RESULTS The results are well organized and presented. I only suggest adjusting the subtitle of Table 1

Table 1. Respondent demographic characteristics Variables (N=22) Participants n / %

- Table 1: Thank you for this feedback. These suggestions were taken into account and are reflected in the updated Table 1.

REFERENCES On page 12, reference 22, wouldn't it be 23? I did not find reference 27 from the reference list in the text of the manuscript.

- Lines 455-459: Citations to these references (originally, 22 and 23) were updated and corrected.
- Reference list: The previous reference 26 was removed as it was ultimately not cited in the final manuscript. This corrected the reviewer's observation made about the original reference 27 in the bibliography.
- Of note, additional references were added to address Reviewer 1's comments regarding currency of the literature, which changed the numbering of the aforementioned references. All citations and references were reviewed carefully to ensure accuracy.

Reviewer: 3

Dr. Sapna Nair, LEAD KREA University, India

Comments to the Author:

Please add description of participant consent procedures followed

- Lines 190-191: Informed consent information was added.

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Ugwuanyi, Christian S. University of the Free State, School of Education Studies
REVIEW RETURNED	07-May-2022

GENERAL COMMENTS	Your manuscript is good for acceptance in the current form
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REVIEWER	Silva, Elisabete Pereira Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Materno-Infantil
REVIEW RETURNED	11-May-2022

GENERAL COMMENTS	The authors made all the adjustments suggested in the first review. In my opinion, the manuscript will make an important contribution to the literature. After review and adjustments is consistent and eligible for publication.
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