



SDI Review Form 1.6

Journal Name:	International Journal of TROPICAL DISEASE & Health
Manuscript Number:	2013_IJTDH_7437
Title of the Manuscript:	The Epidemiology of Trachoma in the Lower Shire valley of Southern Malawi
Type of the Article	Original Research Article

General guideline for Peer Review process:

This journal's peer review policy states that **NO** manuscript should be rejected only on the basis of '**lack of Novelty**', provided the manuscript is scientifically robust and technically sound.

To know the complete guideline for Peer Review process, reviewers are requested to visit this link:

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PART 1: Review Comments

	Reviewer's comment	Author's comment <i>(if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)</i>
<u>Compulsory</u> REVISION comments	Abstract: The results and conclusions do not summarize the risk factors that, according to the objective in the background, were to be determined by this study. Introduction: Lines 50-51: Please first introduce the trachoma atlas and include the link in your introduction. To better contextualize the trachoma situation in Southern Malawi, I would restructure the introduction by first giving the global data on trachoma (already included), then data on the prevalence of trachoma across regions, then the data on trachoma in Africa, using other national and local studies. Similarly, in Lines 52-53, please write out the older data from previous studies in Malawi; don't just reference that studies have been done. The introduction needs a paragraph and literature search on risk factors of trachoma, assuming that risk factors were part of the study objective (Lines 66-67 do not include risk factors in your study objective and need to be revised per the study objective stated in your abstract, as well as the objectives included in Lines 90-92 in the Methods). Lines 41-42 and Lines 59-64 should be moved to the end of the discussion to provide greater context to the interpretation of your results. Your introduction should focus on trachoma prevalence (global, regional, national, and local level) and risk factors. Methods: Line 99: Please summarize the results of the previous survey you mention and include the reference. Lines 76-77, 113: Please cite your data. It is not clear how you determined the risk factors in this study. Please include a paragraph in your methods that details this methodology, identifies and defines the risk factors you chose to study, etc. Results: Please summarize the key findings in Tables 1 and 2- simply referring to the tables is inadequate. Baseline characteristics would be better presented if you included the age-grouping separated by sex. Household	See revised abstract Trachoma atlas introduced, risk factors discussed see pages 3-4 Revised see above See line 116



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	characteristics lose context and relevance when you have not adequately explained your methodology for determining risk factors. Table 3 needs to be completely reformatted; it is not readable in its current presentation. Table 5 should be collapsed with Tables 3 and 4, and I would like to see more data analysis, including your results broken down by sex and then age group to better compare between sexes. Evidence has consistently shown that trachoma is more prevalent in women, and I feel your results do not attempt to comprehensively present the data. I do not see any data on risk factors. You only mention in Lines 190-13 (which just sort of hang there in the results) that a dirty face was the main risk factor, but you should clarify if this was statistically significantly and present the other risk factors you studied and analyzed. Discussion: Lines 202-6: Please elaborate on the WHO guidelines and explain how based on these guidelines you reached your conclusion. Please refer to a recent review of the SAFE strategy, which emphasizes the need to adapt the SAFE strategy to the local context: Lavett DK, Lansingh VC, Carter MJ, Eckert KA, Silva JC. Will the SAFE strategy be sufficient to eliminate trachoma by 2020? Puzzlements and possible solutions. <i>Scientific World J.</i> 2013; 2013;2013: http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2013/648106. What is the solution and adapted strategy for Mwanza proposed as a result of this study? In other words, what are the authors' recommendations for moving forward in each district? I would restructure the discussion to include 1 paragraph on how SAFE will be implemented in Nsanje for all 4 SAFE components. Then 1 paragraph on how it could be adapted and modified for Mwanza. The discussion does not address risk factors. Please include a review of risk factors in your discussion and compare and analyze with your study findings. Risk factors have found to vary and be inconsistent from one study to the next in Africa. Conclusion: The conclusion does not address risk factors. I am wondering if risk factors were never intended to be covered in this manuscript? Overall, there are insufficient data, sources/references, lack of risk factor methodology and definitions with sparse results and no discussion. A major revision is required before this manuscript could be considered for publication. Data add stastical analysis could be much more robust. A more thorough	See lines 226 Tables have been redone see table 1-4 pages 11-14 This has been done. see 319 See line 336-331. The section has been restructured See 346 See line 33 More data has been provided. see tables 1-4
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	literature search is necessary, particularly on risk factors of trachoma.	
<u>Minor</u> REVISION comments	There seem to spacing issues with the current manuscript format that I am not sure if they are a result of the combined pdf for review; however, many words are pegged together and Table 3's formatting issues render it unreadable. A thorough grammar review must be done for the next revision. Commas are often missing, there is inconsistent capitalization throughout the manuscript (Example: Lower Shire Valley), and there is inconsistent plural/singular nouns and verbal agreement throughout the manuscript (Examples: Lines 80-1: officer, who are, conducts; Line 95: size of the sample was been chosen; Lines 129-134...) References are needed to support Lines 77, 83, 84. Line 128: I don't understand the following word and punctuation and think it might be a typo: viz:	Spacing issues were as a result of combined PDF for review. Through revision has been done References have been revised
<u>Optional/General</u> comments	This manuscript appears hurried and sloppy at times. I think if this manuscript were to be carefully rewritten and re-structured with complete and detailed data and statistical analysis in the results (including modified tables), a thorough exploration and explanation of risk factors, including a complete literature search, from the introduction to the discussion and conclusions, then this manuscript could have the potential to be suitable for publication.	Manuscript has been revised.. Tables were to do with conversion from word to PDF. Risk factors have been discussed in detail.