Responses to the Reviewers’ Comments:

1. **On presentation of the findings:**

The results section has been edited to indicate the significance/P values, numbers and percentages consistently throughout the manuscript. Erroneous inferences that are not supported by the results have been revised/removed. Two tables (Tables 1 & 2) have been added to improve the clarity of the results. We have, however, maintained Figures 2-4 in the original format because our intention is to graphically illustrate the proportionate differences within the groups.

1. **Linguistic lapses;**

Where pointed out these have been addressed, for instance the last “hanging sentence” of the abstract has been completed. We have edited the language names for consistency to IsiXhosa and IsiZulu throughout the document. Specific areas where we improved on the language and data availed are mentioned under the specific areas below.

1. **Ethical Clearance Certificate:**

The review process for the protocol at North West University concluded that no ethical clearance was required; approval was granted for the study to proceed on its scientific merits alone. We have included an explanation to that effect under **Ethical Considerations** within the manuscript to that effect

1. **Old references:**

We have replaced some of the older references with newer ones but have kept two – WHO 1988 and ANC 1994 – because they are seminal documents that remain relevant to the issues under discussion.

1. **Access dates for internet references**

These have been included in all the relevant references.

1. **Missing comas and full stops in the references:**

These have been included wherever they were missing.

**Specific Changes within the document**

1. Page 1 – **Abstract** – last sentence under *Results* has been edited to read, “Respondents with no formal education and those with low or no income expressed higher gender preferences expressed higher gender preference rates than did those with formal education or those with higher income, respectively.”
2. Under Methods – Materials, opening sentence has been edited back to read, “……… a sample size of 2000 was………..” for consistency of the tenses.
3. Under Methods –data collection, first paragraph, last sentence has been edited: “Deliberate effort was made to exclude the respondents at or near a pharmacy or any other health facility since it was felt that this may bias the sampling.”
4. Data collection, paragraph 2 – language has been edited IsiZulu and IsiXhosa
5. In response to embedded comment 2 (under findings on language preferences) the wording has been edited to read IsiZulu and IsiXhosa throughout; both percentages and numbers for all the values are presented. A table has been included to contrast the choices of home language and of preferred language for consultation, and the significant differences have been stated.
6. We noted Comment 6: however, all the values in the two bars add up to 100% - 5.5+17+21.8+45.4+10.3 = 100; and 4.5+21.3+9.5+41.4+23.3=100. The other issue with format of the graph has been addressed above.
7. In response to query in Comment 3: additional data on medical aid membership have been provided, including Table 1.
8. Regarding Comment 4: the previous statement mentions 9.7% and not 90% as the reviewer states; we are therefore unable to see the source of the confusion.
9. On convenience and privacy (Page 10) – we have clarified what “at ease” means by using the full wording as in the questionnaire – “at ease to discuss…..” P values have been added where appropriate.
10. More data has been provided in the last two paragraphs on Page 11
11. On Page 12 – we have added Table 2.
12. On Page 14 – the explanation under ethical considerations has been expanded (as stated above).
13. Several references have been deleted, and other added, as appropriate, in the discussion.
14. In response to comments 15 and 16 – the paragraph on Limitations has been edited for clarity and accuracy.
15. The reference list has been updated and the editorial lapses have been addressed.