Reviewer's report

Title: Lack of knowledge about sexually transmitted infections among women in rural Vietnam

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Reviewer: Lynn Atuyambe

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Reviewer's report: Lynn Atuyambe, PhD. School of Public Health, Makerere University

General comments

This article is very well written and highly relevant to the region and local context of rural Vietnam. The introduction clearly spells out the importance of the need to understand sexually transmitted infections among women in rural Vietnam. I feel that the methods are appropriate and the sampling techniques are well done. The data analysis and quality assurance appears to be well done too. The results are clear and straightforward. There is need for some clarification in the methods results and discussion. Overall, I feel this manuscript provides critical information needed for informing potential interventions targeting women in rural Vietnam.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

Not applicable

- Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the abstracts, pg 2 sentence 2, start with ‘In total’ not ‘Totally…’ In the results line 7, one wonders if there is some sort of significance of the mountainous areas with regard to knowledge. Some clarification needs to be made

2. Introduction: In the first paragraph, phrases like ‘less likely’ ‘associated’ are not accompanied by statistical inferences. Would be nice to show the levels of association to give the reader a chance to judge the statements by him/her self. Sentence 1 of paragraph 2, do not mix the referencing styles. Line 23 ‘… brought to light’, I suggest you replace that phrase with ‘highlighted’ or ‘illuminated’

3. Materials and methods: The 2nd sentence under materials is not clear. The part starting with ‘… living in lowland …’ is redundant. At the end of paragraph 2, try to show the purpose / importance of re-interviewing. Then the last paragraph starting with ‘the current study…’ I suggest you say ‘This study was a cross-sectional…’ Again do not start the last sentence with “Totally…”

4. Questionnaire development: It is good that this study was building on an earlier qualitative study done by the same investigator! Replace the word piloted to pilot tested in line 4 of questionnaire development. Line 10 of this sub-section, why did you choose 6 months. Please justify or contextualize it. Most of
behavioral studies use 3 months

5. Data collection and analysis: How was privacy ensured during interviews? '42 trained interviewers. Why did you choose verbal consent instead? Check tense in the second last sentence of the same section.

6. Results: Sentence one of results. 100% response rate is usually hard to achieve, how differently did you do the study to have it 100%? Table 3: What criteria did you use to set the reference population? Could you make the table smart by having the reference category either first or last?

7. Discussion:
   a. On page 10, whereas the study is among women, ne is curious about the knowledge of men in STIs. If different, what is causing the disparity?
   b. Line 17 should read ‘A study in India’ instead of ‘Study elsewhere in India …’
   c. Line 14, the argument is that the unmarried adolescents are shy. Is this really the main reason or could it be that the research assistants were no well prepared to collect this sensitive information from the adolescents. How old were the research assistants? Could the age difference be a factor too?
   d. Methodological considerations: line 6 could it be that because the interviewers also come form the DSS, they are well known to the respondents making them un easy to respond?
   e. Conclusion: How do you suggest women less than 20 years should be targeted for health education since you report they are shy on sexual matters yet they are a very important population? Their strategy should be uniquely different.

8. References: very good, relevant and from the region!

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests