Reviewer's report

Title: Mothers-in-law's role in antenatal care decision-making in Nepal: A qualitative study

Version: 2 Date: 5 February 2010

Reviewer: Chusri Kuchaisit

Reviewer's report:

• Major Compulsory Revisions

The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached. For example, additional necessary experiments or controls, statistical mistakes, errors in interpretation.

1. The purpose of this study is to explore the role that mothers-in-law play in the decision to utilize ANC service. However, there is no supportive data to determine how well the research questions address the stated aims outlined in the abstract.

2. The qualitative research method is appropriate. However, a methodological challenge in cross-language qualitative research still remains. After being interviewed by a researcher who was a native Napali speaker, the recordings were transcribed and translated into English. To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, the authors should provide information regarding conceptual equivalence; the translation method; and the credentials & roles of the translators. Furthermore, it would be better of the author illustrate some more detail: - clearly state of the study setting: for example; where is the ANC clinic and sample place/hometown? This study did not tell us about the target population setting which is effect to the population context; clearly state of the period of collecting data. Another comment the author should describe about the content validity of semi-structure questionnaire.

3. To ensure richness in the data, purposive sampling is appropriate. However, the authors did not explicitly describe the inclusion/exclusion criteria used to select the samples. Three groups of samples (users vs. nonuser of ANC who were pregnant or have a child younger than one year; women vs. family members; and rural vs. urban; page 6) were selected to participate in this study. But, no explicit definition of family members, rural, and urban was established. Furthermore, with the diversities of sample characteristics, the authors should justify that the size of the samples were sufficient to reach saturation.

4. The adequacy of the data to support the discussion and conclusions is difficult to determine. Because the researchers seem to draw a stronger conclusion than is explicitly supported in the provided quotes, the implication is that the participants meant something that goes beyond the quotes. However, no mechanism is provided in which the participants can confirm this. For instance,
one participant still used ANC services even though she had lots of household work (page 9). The mother-in-law of one participant that made use of ANC services expected the pregnant woman to continue with hard work during the pregnancy (page 10). In addition, one mother did not use ANC services even though she stayed with her own mother (page 10). The selected quotes reveal that it may be too early to conclude that the expectations of mothers-in-law in regards to workload has had an impact on the decision to use or not use ANC services.

Since the purpose of qualitative research is to describe/explain/understand the phenomena, not to find causal factors related to ANC uptake, it may not be appropriate to discuss that mothers-in-law are an important factor affecting ANC uptake (page 19, 20). It should be discuss that ANC attendance is influenced by mothers-in-law.

5. The title is appropriate. However, the abstract does not provide a good argument for the significance of this study. Furthermore, the abstract does not make a clear connection between the background and the purpose of this study.

- Minor Essential Revisions

The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.
- The consistency of the word; check up/check-up
- Some words loss and spelling mistake; eg. my in-laws(page 8 in the last paragraph): it should be “my mother in-law”; and afecting(page 4) should be affecting; if ANC (page 5) should be of ANC

- Discretionary Revisions

These are recommendations for improvement which the author can choose to ignore. For example clarifications, data that would be useful but not essential. This paper would be better of the author illustrate some more detail:
- At the end of the rational paragraph, please state clearly of the research objective
- Please clearly state of the study setting: for example; where is the ANC clinic and sample place/hometown? This study did not tell us about the target population setting which is effect to the population context.
- Please describe about the content validity of semi-structure questionnaire.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

All of the above questions are no.

I declare that I have no competing interests.