Reviewer's report

Title: Antenatal counseling in maternal and newborn care: use of job aids to improve health worker performance and maternal understanding in Benin

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Reviewer: Jillian Ireland

Reviewer's report:

The title of the paper fits the study described within it. The abstract is clear and full. The quality of writing is very good and considerations of working within an established healthcare network is to be commended.

The approach is largely epidemiological in nature, all data being quantitatively gathered. The authors may consider suggesting further qualitative work using the same participants- for example, (p14) in-depth interviews with a small group of women to investigate the effectiveness of communication (such as birth preparedness). This could be carried out by one highly trained qualitative researcher and would potentially yield richer understanding of the effects of the intervention.

The authors have considered the realities for healthcare workers and service users in Benin and have designed and tested what appears to be a 'fit-for-purpose' tool which can be incorporated into a routine antenatal care package. The photographs support the article - are the 'job aids' made of a sturdy enough card for long term use?

Quality of communication is measured quantitatively using a pre-tested observation checklist. Has this checklist been validated (no reference)?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.