Reviewer’s report

Title: Women-focused development intervention reduces delays in accessing emergency obstetric care in urban slums in Bangladesh: a cross-sectional study

Version: 2 Date: 18 December 2010

Reviewer: Pierre Fournier

Reviewer’s report:

Answers are appropriate for most of the comments I addressed in my first review. In the selection of sample section (p. 9), the authors added an information about the rate of referral that is very high (24.3%), definitively higher than an expected rate of complication. This means that some referrals were not justified or could not be classified as complications and probably more in the “intervention” group than in the “control” group (obstructed labor, a vague complication, accounts for 60% in the “intervention” group). This should be mentioned as a study definition (lack of clear definition).

I am still concerned by the issue of delay measurement specifically the first one as it is self reported. The authors now provide a table (1) with a comprehensive list of the definitions of the signs or symptoms used to measure this delay. I would have expected lay people definitions instead of professional ones (‘cervix dilated …, blood pressure higher of 140/90, …’). How the enumerators and the researchers did manage this issue?

In addition recognition of symptoms could have been different for women depending on the place of delivery (faster recognition for women who delivered in DC). This should also be discussed as a study limitation. When the authors discuss about the reasons why the first delay is shorter for women delivering, this issue of sign recognition with a birth attendant should be mentioned (p. 17, line 17).

Note: in page 10 avoid repeating in the text what is also in the table 1. Information provided in the table is sufficient.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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