Reviewer's report

**Title:** Maternal Near-Miss in Kassala Hospital, Sudan, an Area of High Maternal Mortality

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 18 March 2011

**Reviewer:** Jeroen van Dillen

**Reviewer's report:**

The article concerns a retrospective descriptive study of maternal morbidity and mortality in a district referral hospital in Sudan, Central Africa. In general I strongly encourage publication of audits/descriptive studies from low income countries, knowing how difficult it is to present data from such a setting. In this case, this is the first report of maternal near miss from Sudan and the data is interesting. However, the manuscript needs major revisions before it is suitable for publication:

1. **Is the question posed by the authors well defined?**
   The question of presenting data from near miss and maternal mortality is well described.

2. **Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
   The methods are clear, although the study period needs to be more precise: instead of 2008-2010, is it January 2008 – December 2010? 2 full years?

3. **Are the data sound?**
   Data seem to be sound, but presentation needs attention (consistency in reporting % and digits behind dot (for example 10.0 in stead of 10).

4. **Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?** No, see above.

5. **Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?** No, see beneath advice.

6. **Are limitations of the work clearly stated?** No: single hospital, and regional referral centre reflecting overreporting due to accumulation of severe cases…

7. **Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?** Not applicable.

8. **Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?** Yes.

9. **Is the writing acceptable?** No: needs to be seen by English corrector.

- **Discretionary Revisions**
  
  Title: I would suggest: Maternal near miss in a rural Sudan.

- **Minor Essential Revisions**
- Numbering of table in the text is incorrect: I would suggest to combine tables 1-3 into resulting in just 2 clear tables
- I would start the discussion stating that this is the first report of maternal near miss in rural Sudan!
- Discussion stating that ‘… 5 times higher than maternal deaths indicating that there is no overestimation of near miss cases’ This conclusion cannot be drawn from these data: please elaborate on why this data might be over- or underestimation (due to single hospital, referral hospital, etc)
- How can you state that ANC coverage, illiteracy and rural residence might predict maternal morbidity if you do not present data for comparison?

**Major Compulsory Revisions**
- The English language is very bad and makes the whole manuscript difficult to read: Sentences to long, incorrect grammar: I would advice to have it rewritten by an English native speaker
- Table 4: gestational age near miss 34.8 (sd 8) versus maternal deaths 25 (sd 6.6): I feel this must be a significant difference: please elaborate and recalculate. Furthermore please look at the presentation of the numbers in tables (as well as text. Why suddebnly 07.5% in stead of 7.5%…
- The mortality index for infection is extremely high: please elaborate on this item: is this seasonal due to malaria?
- Did you perform in debt audit of the cases? please elaborate on substandard care?

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

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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.