Reviewer’s report

Title: Predictors of antenatal mental illness in West Africa: A cross-sectional survey.

Version: 1 Date: 20 August 2011

Reviewer: Sonya Jakubec

Reviewer’s report:

This research article is of importance in its field. Coherent and sound research, the article provides a contribution to the scholarly literature that warrants publication. There is most certainly a dearth of research in the subject of mental health in resource-poor settings. The findings are particular and offer something new to the scholarly literature by highlighting and increasingly important area of health promotion/prevention (violence as a determinant of mental health).

That said, surprise findings (regarding the below average identification of mental illness of participants, and limited number of variables predicting caseness) and the study limitations are discussed. It does not appear data manipulation or other unethical practice has taken place. Adding to the discussion of these surprise finding will add to the depth of the article, however these changes would be at the discretion of the authors as the findings and discussion do hold up in a careful review.

The findings invite those in research and health services to give pause to their practice and the questions they are asking. Minor revisions will assist in a more focused discussion and recommendations that will contribute to scholarship, policy and practice. Thank you for this contribution.

Final peer review: Accept after minor (discretionary) revisions, that include (a few) required minor language corrections before being published.

Specific Review Points

Discretionary revisions:

1. The research question (predictors of antenatal mental illness) is evident, however a clear statement of the theoretical basis (psychiatric epidemiology) would add clarity about the study’s purpose and framework. This description could fit in the background of the study.

2. Methods (Prospective survey design with direct logistic regression assessing a number of variables) are appropriate and well described. Additionally, methods of sampling and measures are well described and, for the most part, sound. The reliability of measurement strategies is clearly outlined and strong rationale is provided from the literature. Measurement/item biases overall are well discussed (note: this could be emphasized a bit more in the limitations section).
Sampling bias is noted, though since findings are not representative, the demographic considerations pertinent to the sample could be more fully discussed (see 5 – discussion/conclusions).

3. Discussion and conclusions are balanced, trustworthy and adequately supported by the data and literature. Limitations are discussed, however the role of sampling bias in the findings and threats to external validity could be more fully discussed. For instance the sample were volunteers from an urban health centre in the capital city, and the role of this particular sample and distinct characteristics of this group could go a long way to explain some of the findings. It would be useful to hear more recommendations for mental health promotion based upon the findings re) domestic violence and previous girl children.

4. Limitations are well stated. As mentioned above however, a fuller description of the sampling bias will strengthen this section, and focus the conclusions/recommendations.

Required Revisions (Minor language issues not for publication):

1. In the Abstract, the first sentence of Methods requires a compound to the verb conducted. So: A prospective survey design was conducted in Lagos.

2. In the main body of the paper, in the Methods section the 8th sentence demands a grammatical edit:
   Either: We estimated sample size using methods proposed by Daniel. Or:
   We estimated sample size using a method proposed by Daniel.

3. In the Discussion section of the body of the manuscript, the first sentence of the 2nd paragraph requires a language edit:
   With regards to anxiety symptoms our results were lower than another study by the same Adewuya et al which found…
   Suggest change to remove “the same”, to read:
   With regards to anxiety symptoms our results were lower than another study by Adewuya et al which found…

4. In the final paragraph of the Discussion, the 3rd sentence reads:
   Bivariate studies have shown a small association between domestic violence and depressive symptoms whilst multivariate studies a small to medium association.
   Would change to:
   Bivariate studies have shown a small association between domestic violence and depressive symptoms whilst multivariate studies show a small to medium association.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field
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:
I declare that I have no competing interests.