Reviewer's report

Title: How many births in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia will not be attended by a skilled birth attendant between 2011 and 2015?

Version: 1 Date: 20 July 2011

Reviewer: Gijs Walraven

Reviewer's report:

This is an important study with major implications for policy makers with an interest in safer motherhood and reduction of stillbirths and neonatal deaths related to intrapartum events (suggestion: stillbirths and neonatal deaths in relation to SBAs - next to maternal mortality - would be mentioned and discussed as well).

Although the assumptions made in the paper seem to make common sense, and the data limitations are well-explained, I feel the manuscript needs to be seen by a statistician.

Minor essential revisions:

p8 last sentence...that in all scenarios at least 90% (85%) of non-SBA births in South Asia (sub-Saharan Africa) were projected....should this not be ....in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa?

p9 last sentence in the paragraph under the heading 'key findings' similarly....in South Asia (sub-Saharan Africa)...to be replaced with...in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa?

p9 last paragraph...here discussion not only about maternal mortality reduction but also stillbirths and neonates related to intrapartum events?

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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