Reviewer's report

Title: Clean delivery practices in rural northern Ghana: A qualitative study of community and provider knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs systems

Version: 1 Date: 31 January 2012

Reviewer: Nandita Thatte

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Minor Essential Revisions
1. Additional background data needed on the overall prevalence of home delivery versus hospital versus TBA in this sample? Prevalence of neonatal infection in this population? This will help strengthen the rationale, context.

2. Table of Demographic Characteristics did not come through/print?

3. Would recommend reviewing some of the literature from Nepal on Birth Practices by TBAs in the community

4. In addition to reporting frequency of bathing, authors should clarify recommended timing of first bath after delivery. Delayed bathing is a WHO recommended practice as part of newborn thermal care and should be addressed. Was bathing done immediately post delivery? Or after a few days?

5. Clarify FGS were community heads male/female? Were men included in any of the IDIs or FGDs? How does the role of men in the community affect current and future practices?

Discretionary Revisions
1. In addition to breastfeeding practices authors may want to discuss practice of feeding colostrum. In many cultures this is often discarded as it is seen as “dirty” however it has significant benefits for newborns. Practices in Ghana around feeding colostrum would be of interest.

2. The role of grandmothers was well discussed. How strong is the role of mothers-in-law in this community? How does this influence newborn practices?

3. Are safe birthing kits available in this community? Authors may want to discuss the use of birth kits that facilitate clean delivery if applicable in this community.

4. Some more thinking about how these results will be used to influence future program design in Ghana would be of interest to wider audiences. Will this information be used to inform programs? Policies? Both?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable

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