Reviewer's report

Title: Maternal infection and risk of intrapartum death: A population based observational study in South Asia

Version: 1 Date: 17 June 2013

Reviewer: Allisyn Moran

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Major Compulsory Revisions:

In the Methods section, the authors should clearly state how "maternal fever" was defined. Was this any reported fever in the three days prior to labor - was there a cut off in terms of how much fever? Later in the paper, the authors mention "high fever". How was this question asked and was it similar to Bangladesh and India. Were there any facility-data on maternal fever - or was is all community-based?

In the Discussion section, the authors discuss the limitations of using self-reported data for assessing maternal fever and PROM. I understand the importance of this study and the lack of information on these variables other than through community-based surveillance. However, the authors should include more information on the specific questions asked and how these conditions were assessed and reported in each of these countries - as well as any information on attempts to validate these types of questions (or other experiences for validation). There is great variation between countries (India and Bangladesh) - so the difference may be in self-report rather than in the actual condition of maternal fever, PROM, or asphyxia. The authors also mentioned that malaria may have accounted for the high rate of maternal fever in India - please include a reference to malaria prevalence in the study area.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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