Reviewer's report

Title: Access to Essential Technologies for Safe Childbirth: A Survey of Health Workers in Africa and Asia

Version: 1 Date: 2 October 2012

Reviewer: Gerald Dubowitz

Reviewer's report:

Major Revisions
none

Minor Essential Revisions

1) There are multiple terms used apparently meaning the same thing, i.e "Health Technologies". The authors need to correct the manuscript to use one term or repeatedly define them (which is suboptimal). Remove, modify or define the terms childbirth technologies, childbirth resources, childbirth equipment, essential techniques etc.

2) BACKGROUND Paragraph 1
The first sentence needs to be moved as its subject is not defined. It is probably best placed at the end of the first paragraph, with a definition (e.g. the one used in the abstract)

3) BACKGROUND Paragraph two: citation needed for mortality or merge and edit sentence one and two assuming safety and mortality are considered the same thing here.

4) METHODS sentence 1
Be consistent with terminology, it should probably read "healthcare technologies" see comment 1 above.

5) METHODS 3rd paragraph last sentence.
Essential technologies is not defined. Need to introduce the idea of essential technologies in this paragraph and then go from there...

6) RESULTS first sentence:
This implies that something was NOT available. So either state the denominator or remove the term "available"

7) RESULTS para 4.
Remove second half of first sentence as it's redundant if you defined this term earlier.
8) RESULTS sentence 2
Define "capacity for operative delivery"

9) DISCUSSION first sentence define what these are. You might add the words defined as... at the end of this sentence.

10) DISCUSSION paragraph 1 sentence 2
Do not split infinitive. should read "reliable technologies were available..."

11) DISCUSSION paragraph two, Much of this material is not discussion and would be better placed in the background section.

Discretionary Revisions

By the end of the paper the concept of essential technologies (or whatever term you choose to consistently use) needs to be defined, so it is possible for the reader to appreciate how the absence of said technologies leads to an increase in morbidity and mortality. With this in mind the aper as a whole needs to be re engineered for this to be clear to the reader (and reviewer).

The authors also need to edit the paper for content to ensure the methods have only methods. results only results etc.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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