Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence and determinants of unintended pregnancy among women in Nairobi, Kenya

Version: 2 Date: 10 December 2012

Reviewer: Sherri Bucher

Reviewer's report:

General Comments:

As the authors correctly note in the introduction to this paper, unintended pregnancy is a serious global public health issue, and a significant underlying factor which contributes to high levels of maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity. Unintended pregnancy impacts myriad aspects of the development and health of individuals, families, and society at large. Resource-poor settings shoulder much of the global burden—and negative consequences—of unintended pregnancies. As such, many low-income countries are not on track to achieve various Millennium Development Goals due to the fact that unintended pregnancy is such a widespread and high-magnitude problem. Thus, the current paper has the potential to add to the current knowledge base regarding correlates of unintended pregnancy among urban African women.

Although the paper addresses an important global health issue, and the research design, methodology, and statistical analyses appear, for the most part, to be adequate, there are several areas of Major Compulsory Revision which should be addressed prior to resubmission.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well-defined?

The study objectives are well-defined. What is less certain is whether or not the information reported is actually “new knowledge” (please also see #7). In light of the current body of work on unintended pregnancies in sub-Saharan Africa, in general, and Kenya, in particular, it is unclear what new knowledge is gained/disseminated by the current study. The authors should clarify what is “innovative,” “new,” or substantially adds to the current knowledge base regarding unintended pregnancy.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

Yes.

3. Are the data sound?

It appears so.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Unable to ascertain from the manuscript.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
No.

Major compulsory revisions:

(1) The discussion section is basically a rehash of the results section. Insufficient information was provided regarding what the results might mean; the results were simply restated. In addition, there is insufficient discussion regarding the predominant finding that ethnicity was consistently found to be one of the strongest correlates of unintended pregnancy among this study population. At the very least, these results should be compared with data (perhaps from the most recent Kenya DHS and certainly with recently published literature) regarding the rates of unintended pregnancies from the Provinces where the various ethnic groups predominately reside, e.g., Western and Nyanza Provinces.

(2) Nairobi Province has a majority of residents from the Kikuyu tribe, as indicated by the fact that a majority of women sampled (34%) self-identified as Kikuyu. However, a higher prevalence of unintended pregnancies was apparently reported among other ethnic groups living in both slum and non-slum areas of Nairobi. Why might this be the case? There are many possible reasons, each of which holds specific implications for how to address the issue of reducing unintended pregnancies among all women in informal settlements in Nairobi, overall, and among particular ethnic groups, specifically. This should be addressed by the authors in the Discussion section.

(3) Similar to previous work from Kenya, the authors found that, in terms of age, the highest level of unintended pregnancy occurred among 15-19 year old women. This finding would be enhanced by comparing and contrasting the current findings in relationship to other research published from the same setting (e.g., Mother–daughter communication about sexual maturation, abstinence and unintended pregnancy: Experiences from an informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya, Joanna Crichtona, , , Latifat Ibisomib, Journal of Adolescence, Vol 35(1), February 2012, pages 21-30)

(4) Contrary to many other studies looking at the possible correlates of unintended pregnancy, the authors found that educational status apparently had no significant impact on prevalence of unintended pregnancies. These rather unexpected results should be discussed in relation to both the outcomes of this specific study, and the results of other studies from the same (e.g., Korogocho) or similar settings.

6. Are the limitations of the work clearly stated?

Major compulsory revision: No. A paragraph about study limitations, and how these limitations might impact the interpretation of outcomes and results, should be incorporated in the manuscript.
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

Major Compulsory Revision: The literature review is outdated and seems incomplete. There are several recently published papers regarding unintended pregnancy in the African context that could be cited by the authors; incorporating selected results from these recently published studies would substantially improve both the introduction and discussion sections of the manuscript. Incorporating more recent, Kenya-specific literature, in particular, would substantially strengthen the paper.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Major Compulsory Revision: There is no abstract currently included. An abstract should be included with the manuscript.

9. Is the writing acceptable?

Major Compulsory Revision: Editing is required to reduce repetition of information and improve clarity.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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