Reviewer's report

Title: Delivery and cord care practices in Pemba Tanzania: A qualitative study of community, hospital staff and community level care providers for knowledge, attitudes, belief systems and practices

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Reviewer: Cheryl Moyer

Reviewer's report:

The authors present a qualitative study to explore the attitudes, beliefs and practices of community members and health workers related to delivery and newborn care. The article is comprehensive and the methodology is sound. However, I had several concerns about the paper as written.

In the introduction of the study, the authors say that this phase of research (and this manuscript) was designed to: 1) collect information on delivery practices and understand neonatal and umbilical cord care practices in the community; 2) Get feedback, perceptions, and suggestions from TBAs, community members, and health professionals regarding liquid cleansing solution as an umbilical cord care practice; 3) To evaluate the acceptance and barriers for the use of the proposed chlorhexadine cleansing solution; and 4) To develop communication messages, study procedures, and the framework for implementing a cord care intervention.

In reading the study, I had competing reactions. First, the manuscript seemed too broad – I would have preferred to see a more focused inquiry on cord care and attitudes toward chlorhexadine alone. Second, I wasn’t sure that the manuscript (or the abstract) met the goals described in the introduction. Third, I wasn’t sure that this manuscript taught me anything particularly new. Recent work in Ghana (Moyer et al. BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth 2012, 12:50 http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2393/12/50 ; Hill Z, Manu A, Tawiah-Agyemang C, Gyan T, Turner K, Weobong B, Ten Asbroek AHA, Kirkwood BR: How did formative research inform the development of a home-based neonatal care intervention in rural Ghana? J Perinatol 2008, 28:S38–S45.) and Tanzania (Mosha F, Winani S, Wood S, Changulacha J, Ngasalla B: Evaluation of the effectiveness of a clean delivery kit intervention in preventing cord infection and puerperal sepsis among neonates and their mothers in rural Mwanza Region, Tanzania, Tanz Health Res Bull 2005, 7(3):185–188.) have widely reported similar results to what was presented.

I think the manuscript would be strengthened if the sole focus was attitudes toward uptake of Chlorhexadine, and the barriers / perceptions in the context of planning for a wider study.

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.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.