Reviewer's report

Title: Mobile phones improve antenatal care attendance and quality of care in Zanzibar: A cluster randomized controlled trial

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Reviewer: Alex Muturi

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The Paper presents findings from an RCT that sought to establish if provision of mobile text reminders and health promotion content is associated with improved utilization of Focused ANC services in a developing country setup.

A very informative paper, which I believe would be quite informative for policy making. A few clarifications if added into the script would make it more convincing: there are discretionary revisions.

a) Regarding the intervention group: What was the proportion of vouchers that were actually used? What was the proportion of mothers in intervention group who actually received at least one unidirectional text messages?

b) Was there stock out of Tetanus Toxin or Malaria Medicines at any time during the course of the intervention in either control or test facilities?

c) Since the intervention was not blinded to the care providers, how can we be sure that improvements mentioned in the secondary outcome measures were not confounded by the intervention sites' health provider knowledge? For instance, were providers in intervention facilities able to access the health promotion content that was being pushed through text reminders? Were the control facilities' providers at the same level at baseline in terms of knowledge about the FANC guidelines?

d) it is clear that the intervention did increase the ANC attendance. the assertion that needs more justification is that it increased the quality of care. is the increase in uptake of malaria prevention and other adjunct interventions directly related to the quality of care? what constitutes "good quality of care in ANC services" a proper write up on this would make the paper more convincing in my opinion especially on the "improved quality of care" assertion.

Conclusion

The paper is clear, flows logically, and written in an easy to understand manner. It appears to cover the area of practice quite well. It’s of relevance to policy makers in the region.

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.