Author's response to reviews

Title: 'Born before arrival': user and provider perspectives on health facility childbirths in Kapiri Mposhi district, Zambia

Authors:

Selia Ng'anjo Phiri (Selia.Nganjo@student.uib.no)
Knut Fylkesnes (Knut.Fylkesnes@cih.uib.no)
Lorena Ana Ruano (Ana.Ruano@cih.uib.no)
Karen Marie Moland (Karen.Moland@cih.uib.no)

Version: 3
Date: 20 July 2014

Author's response to reviews: see over
Point by point response to reviewers’ reports

Reviewer’s report
Title: ‘Born before arrival’: user and provider perspectives on health facility childbirths in Kapiri Mposhi district, Zambia
Version: 2
Date: 11 June 2014
Reviewer: Vincent De Brouwere

Reviewer’s report:
I found the paper well written and relevant, although nothing is quite new. The authors have clearly defined their question: they have shown ‘in a previous study based on data from a cross-sectional survey conducted in the three districts that facility childbirth was associated with striking socio-economic and geographic inequities but it did not seem to be associated with trust and perceived quality of care in the Kenyan and Zambian districts. In this study they further investigated the low utilisation of health facility birth care in the district in Zambia focusing on trust.’

The methods are appropriate and well described: Through ‘a qualitative study design they explored perceptions and experiences of users and providers about health care seeking at childbirth’. The FGD were conducted ‘with women attending the antenatal clinic (ANC) and out-patient services at the hospital. A description of the sample is in Table 1’. In-depth interviews were conducted with 25 local stakeholders in or outside health facilities.

It is difficult to know if the data are sound but the authors are qualified and the method description looks ok. A possible bias is that some of the interviewers (the 1st author) is gynecologist and one of the interviewers is a nurse midwife with the risk of influencing patients and TBAs.

The manuscript adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

The discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data.

The limitations of the work are clearly stated, except that 1) the study was led by medical personnel (2 on 3) with a potential bias; 2) the study took place in one setting and the external validity is limited to the Kapiri Mposhi community.

- Response:
We have included a statement in the possible limitations. “...Additionally, two of the interviewers for the IDIs have health backgrounds. This could have influenced responses from participants by showing willingness to utilize health facilities since most women appeared to be aware of the health policy requirement of facility childbirth.”

The literature review was not quite extensive and half of the papers were published between 2003 and 2007. Note that a paper ‘submitted’ cannot be cited as a publication.

The title and abstract accurately convey what has been found and the writing is acceptable.

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

I would suggest to give the medical name of the herb ‘palibe kantu’ (Dicoma
anomala or Sansevieria hyacinthoides?) and its documented effects. This will help the reader to understand if it is a real danger for a pregnant woman.

- **Response:**
  A statement has been added to the manuscript: “Further research is needed in the Zambian setting to identify the commonly used traditional herbs in pregnancy and childbirth and their side effects as has been done in the South African setting.”

The authors mentioned that some interviews took place in health facilities and may have influenced the interviewees but they did not mention the fact that an obstetrician or a nurse midwife may also influence the way interviewees responded.

- **Response:**
  A statement has been added to possible limitations in the discussion as indicated above.

I would strongly encourage the authors to add some papers to support the ‘trust’ discussion, the issue of childbirth complication and infidelity, the responsiveness of health personnel around childbirth.

- **Response:**
  Some papers have been included in the discussion. References 23, 24 (Kruk M et. al.) and ref 25 (Kumbani et. al.) all report on trust of health facilities in relation to women’s preferences and perceptions of quality of care. Ref 26 (Njeru MK et. al.) reported on responsiveness in relation to HIV testing and counselling. Ref 27 (Otis KE & Brett JA) reported on perceived quality of care and utilization of childbirth facilities in Bolivia. On childbirth complication and infidelity, one more reference from Zambia ref 33 (Hadley MB and Tuba M) has been included. Elsewhere in Africa, Mrisho M et. al and Kyomuhendo GB (ref 29 and 34) have also reported on cultural belief of childbirth complication and infidelity.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

- **Response:**
  The tables have now been displayed as figures. Figure 2 indicates the flow process from meaning unit to theme.

Withdraw the reference “Ng’anjo-Phiri S, Kvale G, Kiserud T, Byskov J, Evjen-Olsen B, Michelo C, Echoka E, Fylkesnes K: Factors associated with health facility childbirth in districts of Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia: a population based survey” which is a submitted article and not a publication.
- **Response:**

*The article is now published in BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth.*

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached): no  

**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

---

**Reviewer's report**  
**Title:** 'Born before arrival': user and provider perspectives on health facility childbirths in Kapiri Mposhi district, Zambia  
**Version:** 2  
**Date:** 18 June 2014  
**Reviewer:** Abraham Hodgson  

**Reviewer's report:**  
The study examines user and provider perspectives on health facility childbirths in Kapiri Mposhi district, Zambia. Using qualitative methods, it explores how users and providers perceived the low utilization of health facilities during childbirth. It discusses the perceptions and experiences of community members and health personnel on home and facility delivery and reasons for not utilizing a facility at delivery. It concludes that trust and perceived quality of care were important and influenced facility childbirth.  

**Comments**  
This is a well written manuscript. The research question is well defined, the methods are appropriate and fairly well described but need to address a few comments raised below. The data is sound and the discussion and conclusions are well balanced. Some limitations of the work are clearly stated but need to address a few more stated below. The authors clearly acknowledge work upon which they are building and the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found.  

**Minor Essential Revisions:**  
1. In methods section of Abstract, line 2 mentions FGDs were conducted in 2007 but in Methods section of manuscript under Sample selection and data collection sub-section, line 4 mentions 2008; also in table 1 column 1 row 1 it mentions 2008 as when FGDs were conducted – need for clarification.  

- **Response:**  
*The year has been corrected in the Abstract (corrected to 2008).*
2. Specify the background of the moderators that conducted the FGDs – were they health personnel and possible limitations.

   - **Response:**
     The background of the moderators for the FGDs is now specified in the methods section: “A topic guide with focus on trust was used and the FDGs, which were facilitated by experienced social scientist researchers and an assistant researcher with teaching background,…”

3. Specify background of women attending OPD who participated in the FGD – were they women with previous home delivery?

   - **Response:**
     A table (Table 1) has been included to show characteristics of women who participated in the FGDs. Also a statement is included at the beginning of findings to indicate their educational background.

4. Discuss in the limitations the use of health personnel to conduct some of the interviews (IDIs).

   - **Response:**
     A statement has been added to possible limitations as indicated above.

Minor issue not for publication:
Typo - Under Discussion, paragraph 3, Line 9, delete ‘the’ before sub-Saharan

   - **Response:**
     The typing error has been deleted.

**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 have no competing interests