Reviewer's report

Title: A Retrospective Cohort Study Investigating Individual and Community Determinants of Facility Delivery in Rufiji, Tanzania

Version: 2 Date: 2 June 2014

Reviewer: Philip Adongo

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Reviewer comments:

Major Revisions

This paper, which looked at “A Retrospective Cohort Study Investigating Individual and Community Determinants of Facility Delivery in Rufiji, Tanzania”, is very important addition to the literature on delivery in health facilities. However I have two issues that the authors will need to seriously consider addressing.

1. The assumption that in-migrants and sister or sister-in-law place of delivery could be described as social network could be very misleading. The term social network presupposes that there is interpersonal relations- the author cannot attest to the fact that was any interactions between the mothers such persons. It important to say what they found instead of talking about social network which, has not been proven with data.

2. The descriptions of the variables, both in and out migration were not well defined. In reference to these, did the authors distinguish between rural-rural migration and rural-urban migration? The anticipation is that migration may improve knowledge as rightly discussed by the authors but where people migrate into places of similar socio-economic and environment characteristics, what will be the additional knowledge gained? Did the analysis take this into consideration?

Minor Revisions

Abstract:

METHODS: The method describes only what was done and does not provide any information regarding the source and magnitude of the data used for this paper.

RESULTS: The authors should support the findings with some figures, for example when the authors say household with in-migrants, what is the extent? Providing the odds and confidence intervals will give a better understanding of paper findings. I suggest this done for all key findings mentioned in the abstract.

INTRODUCTION:

Paragraph 1 - the first 2 sentences are statements of fact and should be supported with evidence (referenced). Please delete “the country of study” from
Paragraph 2- here again the first 2 sentences should be supported with appropriate literature.

DATA AND METHODS:
Paragraph 1- HDSS should be introduced before been used subsequently. Paragraph 2- you introduce RHDSS and then you write Rufiji HDSS. The authors are advised to show consistency in their writing. The manuscript has several of these inconsistencies and needs to be sorted out.

RESULTS:
As mentioned in the method section abbreviations mean nothing when they are not introduced. It is not proper to write village names in abbreviations anyway. Are these abbreviations which the authors used names known to the communities? I do not believe villages/communities names in Tanzania are known as abbreviations (for example village IKC, community IKN ???) If these are not villages but zones or geographic identifications then the author should report them as such.

The authors are advised to provide a better title for figure 1. The word “regional variation” has been used in the title and this may be misleading since you describing the situation in one district.

DISCUSSION:
Paragraph 1: does not discuss any result; it only repeats what has been mentioned in the result section. The authors may consider improving it or completely deleting it.

Paragraph 2: the 1st sentence is so loaded with several important issues that after reading through, one does not get the message it tries to depict. The sentence needs to rewritten to clarify the message that it seeks to convey to the reader. The same can be said about the 2nd sentence, it looks very blundering.

The paper should have a section that thoroughly discusses all the limitations of the study instead of burying one sentence in the discussions as limitation in paragraph 5. I will suggest that the authors create a section on the limitations of the paper.

CONCLUSIONS
The authors conclude the paper based on social networks, which results of the study cannot definitely proof. The authors are advised to rewrite the conclusions.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests: 

I declare I have no competing interests