Reviewer's report

Title: Exploring the first delay: a qualitative study of home deliveries in Makwanpur district Nepal

Version: 2 Date: 16 November 2013

Reviewer: Joanna Raven

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions
This is a well written and interesting study. However there are a number of points that need to be considered:

1. In the results section, the findings are triangulated with the findings from the “Quality of Care” study. This raises several issues: there are no details about how this study was conducted and importantly any limitations; it makes it difficult to follow the findings from the submitted paper; the authors compare perceptions of women with perceptions of different stakeholders from the “Quality of Care” study – it is not clear whose views you are presenting when you present the findings from the Quality of Care study. I suggest that these findings are removed from the results section and then referred to in the discussion section – and refer to the report or publication of the “Quality of Care” study.

2. Rationale for selecting women from control and intervention sites should be clearly stated. In the findings, the differences between these two groups should be highlighted and then discussed in the discussion section.

3. It would be good to have more details about the women who were interviewed including who conducted their delivery – were there any women who delivered at home with a SBA?

4. Was the aim of the study to help develop the intervention and the monitoring tools for the trial? It is also not clear when the data collection was done and if and how the findings have fed into the intervention design.

Minor essential revisions

1. Another limitation of the study: although the views of women are vitally important in understanding why they deliver at home, it is also important to understand the views of the other decision makers in households, who may have more influence / power over the choice of place of delivery.

2. “Data were collected in Nepali by Nepalese researchers who had experience and training in research methods” (p6). Does this experience and training relate to qualitative research methods? How did the authors assure the quality of the data collection?

3. How was the topic guide developed?

4. Page 9: “A few women said that it was easy to deliver at home”. What does this mean?
5. Page 16: “Barriers leading to delays in the home may change”. This is not clear.

6. Page 17: “Generally, there is little evidence regarding how quality improvement initiatives can improve outcomes [28].” This reference refers to the district demographic profile of Nepal. Other references may be more relevant here.

7. Page 17: Sentence beginning “Women in our study reported...were less prominent from other types of respondents.” This is unclear as there were no other types of respondents in this study.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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