Reviewer's report

Title: Use of antenatal services and delivery care in Entebbe, Uganda: a community based survey

Version: 1 Date: 22 March 2007

Reviewer: William Stones

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a well designed population based sample survey aiming to generate policy relevant insights into maternal and neonatal health in Uganda. But...

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

I have two areas of reservation about the manuscript that I suggest the authors consider addressing:

1. The analysis and how it relates to research questions relevant to this setting. Actually ANC usage is extremely high in the area and the quality appears to be not at all bad overall. Rather than splitting the scores by median would it not be more relevant to use the statistical tools to try to identify marginalised/underserved groups who perhaps should be the main focus for health interventions?

2. The manuscript is insufficiently related to the setting. The 'usual' references about NMR and MMR are cited but we are given no info about the actual NMR or MMR in Uganda or the local area. Whatever one's reservations about DHS it seems odd not to refer to the available data. Is the local hospital reporting lots of deaths or admissions of sick neonates? Is there really a problem in this area? The current policy focus on reducing the number of ANC visits to eg 4 and making them richer in content somehow escapes mention. Why not include the distribution of number of visits in the univariate table?

There are a number of publications from Uganda cited but the actual findings and implications of these studies are not seriously discussed. Overall the manuscript fails to give a convincing rationale for the study in this setting or draw out really useful policy messages, such as how some of the unnecessary ANC effort can be redirected into targeting vulnerable subgroups and strengthening delivery care.

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

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests