Reviewer's report

Title: Determinants of use of maternal health services in Nigeria - looking beyond individual and household factors

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Reviewer: Margaret Elizabeth Kruk

Reviewer's report:

This is a clear and well-written paper. It presents important data from a country that contributes substantially to global maternal mortality figures. The methods are solid as is the placement of this paper in the existing literature. I have three major comments.

Major comment

1. Given their focus in the introduction on the importance of community-level factors, I would encourage the authors to include some other community-level factors (beside media exposure) here. The authors could look at derived group variables (using the non-self mean they already mention) for other covariates, such as education, etc.

2. Similarly with the state-level: are there no covariates that could be modeled here to try to explain some of the (proportionally large) variance at the state level? How about state health spending or physicians/nurses per capita or some other marker of health system infrastructure.

3. I would strongly recommend that the authors disaggregate their three outcome variables (in addition to showing the combined “index of maternal health service utilization”). This will make the paper much more comprehensible vis a vis other published literature.

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 I have no competing interests