Reviewer's report

Title: Infant feeding practices among HIV exposed infants using summary index in Sidama Zone, Southern Ethiopia: A cross sectional study

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Reviewer: Huan Zeng

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Re: 'Infant feeding practices among HIV exposed infants using summary index in Sidama Zone, Southern Ethiopia: A cross sectional study'

Demewoz Haile Mr, Tefera Belachew professor, Getenesh Birhanu Mrs, Tesfaye Setegn Mr and Sibhatu Biadglign Mr

BMC Pediatrics

Research article

The research question has its interests. However, the methods are weak so far. The limitation has not been stated. The Major Compulsory Revisions are as following:

Last paragraph of introduction
1. “So far ICFI has only been used in African; Asian and Latin American countries among HIV unexposed children. The application of this summary index for assessing feeding practices of HIV exposed infants is not known in Ethiopia by considering the current recommendation for HIV exposed infants.”

Here it seems like that the study focus on use of ICFI among HIV-exposed infants, but actually, the study assesses CS-ICFI. What is the ICFI, what is the CS-ICFI, there need be more introduction in Methods.

Methods
2. What are the recruitment criteria for the target population? How to recruit them?

3. “However four health institutions were excluded because they had no eligible study subjects for this study”.

Why they are not eligible?

4. “A total of 184 HIV exposed infant-mother pairs were included in the study”

How about the proportion of these infant-mother pairs? (The same question: what is the total number of infant-mother pairs in this area?). Representative?

5. Need more introductions about the structured questionnaire? How to develop? How about the items?
6. Can the feeding practices be fully assessed by the qualitative 24 recall method and 7-day quasi food group frequency? Why?

7. “Health professionals were recruited and trained for two days on data collection techniques.”

Need more introductions.

8. Need more introductions about Infant and child feeding index (ICFI).

9. “The 24 hour dietary diversity score is a sum score of: Grains + Tubers + Milk +Vitamin A-rich fruits/vegetables + other”

What is the reference?

10. What is CS-ICFI? Need more introductions.

11. The aim of the study “Therefore, the objective of this study is to assess the infant feeding practices of HIV exposed infants using summary index and its association with their nutritional status in Sidama zone, Southern Ethiopia”

What does nutritional status mean? What are the indicators for it? There should be description in Methods.

Discussion

12. The discussion would better clearly state the disadvantages/bias of the index, direct the refinement, introduce how to use it properly.

13. What are the limitations of the study?

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests