Reviewer's report

Title: Intimate partner violence and infant morbidity: evidence of an association from a population-based study in eastern Uganda

Version: Date: 10 April 2007

Reviewer: Anita Raj

Reviewer's report:

General

Overall, the manuscript offers important information and findings relevant to the fields of maternal and child health and pediatrics. The work can be improved upon with a more structured and focused introduction and greater clarity of methods and analyses. The abstract should then be altered accordingly.

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

Introduction: Given your population is mothers of infants, focus on IPV prevalence among pregnant and new mothers would help support your outline justifying the need for this work. Additionally, the background should be specific that IPV has been linked with increased likelihood of mortality in (specify countries here), but research on IPV and infant morbidity in these countries is lacking. This lack of research is why your work is important. That idea is getting lost in your more general lit review.

Methods: Sampling and procedure seemed solid, but subheadings can help the reader know the focus of your paragraphs in this section. Your measures really need to be specified more directly. IPV questions should be stated even if you have them in your table later.

Analyses: Your outcomes include both infant morbidity data (e.g., illness, fever, wasting) and maternal/paternal health behaviors on behalf of the infant (i.e., breastfeeding, vaccinations). The latter does not seem like relevant child health outcomes but likely relevant covariates to consider. Adjusted analyses are unclear throughout the paper; I have no idea what you adjusted for and why.

Results: Give age range of infants. When discussing associations, be consistent; always note independent variables before dependent variables. Certain associations significant in crude analyses were lost in adjusted analyses; that is not clearly stated in your results. What did you adjust for?

Discussion: More analysis on what you found versus what you did not find is needed, as is analysis why certain significant findings are lost in adjusted analyses. Also, I think there is some lit from the US (PRAMS) at least on IPV and child health outcomes that you need to include. Look up Jay Silverman’s work. Good presentation of different reasons for results; good review of limitations.

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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)

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

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.