Reviewer's report

Title: Association of various reproductive rights, domestic violence and marital rape with depression among Pakistani women.

Version: 4 Date: 14 August 2009

Reviewer: Marleen Bosmans

Reviewer's report:

A. Major Compulsory Revisions that still need to be made

A.1. Context:
"Reproductive rights is not only absence of reproductive illness but the right to life and health, rights to bodily integrity and security, the right to the benefits of scientific progress (e.g. control of reproduction), the right to education, the right to equality in marriage and divorce and the right to non-discrimination [11]."

Comment:
Sexual and reproductive rights are closely related with the right to education, but the right to education as such is not part of sexual and reproductive rights. The right to sexual and reproductive health education, however, is part of sexual and reproductive rights. Please correct. For your information: WHO working definitions of sexual and reproductive rights can be found at: http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/gender/sexualhealth.html

According to the ICPD Programme of Action, sexual health is part of reproductive health (Chapter 7 § 2-3), as result of a political compromise to be able to recognize sexual and reproductive health as a human right. In your paper, however, you are basically referring to women's sexual rights (according to the WHO working definition). I suggest you not to talk about "reproductive rights", but to restrict to "sexual rights", which would be much more precise.

A.2. Results:
"Table 2 shows the distribution and association of various reproductive rights among cases and controls. 31% of the women got married at an age of #18. 72% married on their parents decision and 49% did not even meet their spouse once before getting married. 30% of the women were not allowed by their spouses to initiate intimacy and 23% were ever been forced to have sexual relations with their spouses."

Comment:
Please clarify the "various reproductive/sexual rights" that you are referring to.

A.3. Discussion:
i) "This is the first study to examine for the association of women's depression
with a variety of inadequate reproductive rights."

Comment:
1) Please specify the reproductive/sexual rights you are referring to. 2) Be careful about the language you are using. There is no such thing as “inadequate” reproductive/sexual rights. Women may not have the possibility of enjoying their rights and States may fail to take measures in order to ensure that the sexual and reproductive rights of women are respected, protected and fulfilled. Women’s depression is associated with the fact that their rights are violated.

ii) "The results of this study suggest that women lack various reproductive rights in the population surveyed and the prevalence of domestic abuse is also high both of which are determinants of depression among Pakistani women of reproductive age."

Comment:
1) Domestic abuse is a form of gender-based violence, hence a violation of reproductive/sexual rights. By referring to reproductive/sexual right on the one hand, and to domestic abuse on the other, you create the impression as if you are talking about two different things. Please, reformulate.
2) Once again: specify the reproductive/sexual rights you are referring to.

A.4. Conclusion:
"Our study indicates that there is a need to focus on the provision of basic reproductive rights to women in our society."

Comment:
1) Services are provided, reproductive rights are not provided but realized to the extent that they are respected-protected- fulfilled.
2) There is no such thing as “basic” reproductive/sexual rights. All human rights are equally important and there is no hierarchy among rights. Rights include freedoms (e.g. freedom for women to choose their husband) and entitlements (e.g. entitlements to be protected by law against all forms of gender-based violence).
3) Please reformulate.

Minor Essential Revisions

At times, incorrect use of the English language. Please edit carefully.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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'