Reviewer's report

Title: Persistent high fertility in Uganda: young people recount obstacles and enabling factors to use of contraceptives

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Reviewer: Gail Hawkes

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Persistent high fertility in Uganda: young people recount obstacles and enabling factors to use of contraceptives
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Reviewer comments: All Minor essential revisions

Summary: A fascinating and important study that uses qualitative research methods to good effect to display the role of a variety of subjective factors that impact upon fertility rates and safe asex practicea, My comments are more to clarify the expression of the findings rather that to take issue with them. I am also struck by the similarities between the attitudes of the young people in this study and those discussed by the researchers in the UK’s Women Risk and Aids initiative in the 1990s. I’ve included two citations below that might be of interest to the authors listed above. There might be scope for developing an international dimension to a study to follow up and refine these findings, because I think the authors have raised this possibility in their conclusion and I agree that further studies would be needed.

http://www.tpress.free-online.co.uk/wrap.html
Risk, power and the possibility of pleasure: Young women and safer sex
J. Hollanda; C. Ramazanoglu; S. Scott; S. Sharpe; R. Thomsone AIDS Care, Volume 4, Issue 3 July 1992 , pages 273 - 283

Detailed comments

P4 lines 11-12 I would delete the sentence that begins ‘there is unmet need...’ and replace it with ‘there is a mismatch between desire to restrict births and the actual use of contraception despite widespread knowledge of its efficacy’. Then continue with ‘Two of five young women...’

P4 lines 19 ff sentence beginning ‘:Previous studies....’ after ‘use among your people..’ replace the rest of the sentence with ‘that would explicitly explore the factors in the decision making process about use, or non-use of forms of contraception’. This is an important paragraph to set the scene for the study and the wording is a bit unclear.

Throughout the section that presents the data the quotations are followed with ‘unmarried women’ and ‘unmarried men’ . I think it would be clearer if you said...
‘unmarried women’s group’ or, just ‘unmarried woman’.

P11, line 6 Include ‘some’ – ‘Some married women..’

P12 line 11. Include the figures for sexually active population

P12 line 13 expand on what scare tactics parents use

In this discussion generally about parents and youthful sexual behaviour – what is the age of consent for heterosexual sex in Uganda?

P13 line 2 – Specify which Church? Is it just Pentecostal? Same point – what is the source of the stigma and is it all young people?

P13 line 10 – what happens if young men seek condoms?

P14 line line 8 after quote – maybe cite the UK studies about trust and risk in the papers cited above?

P14 line 19 Were there any sex workers in the group studied?

P15 line 16 add ‘Incidents of self-prescription were identified among participants’.

P16 first subheading replace ‘to’ with ‘for and typo ‘use’

P16 line 16 Health clinics? Or Units?

P17 line 3 Cite source of this claim?

P17 line 5 meaning not clear

P18 last sentence before discussion: an interesting contrast to the stigma from the community about contraceptive use discussed earlier

P19 line 4 add ‘which serve’ as obstacles...

P19 line 6 replace second ‘contraceptives’ with ‘them’.

P 19 line 13 cut sentence beginning with ‘The participant’s ..’ and move it to the opening sentence of this paragraph

Overall, perhaps there should be more discussion about the impact of gendered cultural structures and how this is played out in the sometimes contradictory ideas that are revealed in data. At times the concluding discussion becomes a bit repetitive in reiteration of the actual findings. Deepening the discussion of the findings through exploring the contradictions would enhance the presentation of this fascinating data.

Dr Gail Hawkes. University of New England, Australia

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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