Reviewer's report

Title: Maternal and Neonatal Health Expenditure in Mumbai Slums: A Cross Sectional Study

Version: 1 Date: 28 October 2010

Reviewer: Steffen Flessa

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revision

To the authors:

1. Principal statement: This article covers a very important topic and has access to data which the scientific community should get to know. Consequently, I strongly encourage the authors to improve this article so that it can be published.

2. Heading: The paper is mainly focussed on catastrophic household expenditure. This should be reflected in the title. I also wonder whether we could write "Mumbai (India)" because it might be that not every reader knows at once where Mumbai is.

3. Abstracts:
   - 2. sentence: "household poverty on ...": add.
   - methods: this formula is unusual for an abstract. Better explain your methods in words.
   - when you use the term "catastrophic" first time, you should also explain what it is. not later.

4. Background:
   - add some references about similar papers on costing of health services in India and of maternal health care in developing countries.

   You reference only papers on catastrophic health care expenditure.

   - correct some spelling errors which WORD does not find (e.g. "and determined the risk factors" - risk!!!
   - several times no space between a word and "[", e.g. "coverage[5]".

5. Methods:
   - the section on data analyiss is too short. For instance, we do not know how you did the PCA and how you did the tests.
   - The study is from 2005, but you use a conversion rate of 2010. Did you inflation adjust?
- you should discuss briefly the quality of your data. From my experience these kind of interviews lead to a strong bias as the poorer quintile does not have the intellectual capacity to re-call all this data.

6. Results:
- what about those who do not even come to any kind of health care services and to your interviews? In other words: do you really cover the poorest of the poor?
- The argument on page 10 on the incidence of cata. spending across wealth quintiles does not convince me. I would expect that the poorest have a higher incidence, but it seems to be not the case. Why?

7. Conclusions:
- these are no conclusions but merely a summary.
- there is much to learn from your data! Explain more!
- add a few sentences about the limitations of your study.

8. table 1: add year of study and year of US$ (2005US$ or 2010US$)?

9. Figure 2: a linear function might not be appropriate. It looks more like an U-shape.

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.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'