Reviewer’s report

Title: 'We call it the shaking illness': perceptions and experiences of Parkinson's disease in rural northern Tanzania

Version: 1 Date: 18 January 2011

Reviewer: Gretchen L Birbeck

Reviewer’s report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes
3. Are the data sound? Yes
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes
9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes

This is a well written and interesting sociological report of PD from Tanzania—likely the first from Eastern Africa. Data collection involved an excellent spectrum of people relevant to the assessment. A few suggested additions, edits or improvements.

Minor essential revisions
1. Page 5, paragraph 2, line 3: “only a matter of perception”. A person’s self report of sexual satisfaction is by its very nature limited to a perception.
Page 6, paragraph 2, line 3: “geographic” features is probably more appropriate than “physical"

Discretionary Revisions

The study that led to this work was a population-based prevalence study. It would be helpful to provide this prevalence information and/or cite the study that does.

The treatment gap was massive (26/28 untreated). What evidence did you encounter for the problem being missed by healthcare workers who saw the patient but failed to make the diagnosis? PD is an “across the room” diagnosis once someone has any significant disability. Were these untreated patients people who were never seen by HCWs? Never diagnosed? Or diagnosed but treatment not available?
**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:**

- Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper, either now or in the future? No
- Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper, either now or in the future? No
- Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript? No
  
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- Do you have any other financial competing interests? No
- Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper? No
  
  'I declare that I have no competing interests'