Reviewer’s report

Title: Health Education for Microcredit Clients in Peru: A Randomized Controlled Trial

Version: 3 Date: 5 January 2011

Reviewer: Madhu Ghimire

Reviewer’s report:

Review:

1. The paper cites poverty, lack of female empowerment and lack of education as the major risk factors for childhood illnesses.

2. The study described in the paper aimed to test the hypothesis that participation in health education sessions improves knowledge of child health issues and this, in turn, leads to enhanced growth and reduced illnesses among children. The revised version has convincingly shown that the group that received health education sessions gained in knowledge but there was no enhancement of growth or reduction in illnesses among their children.

3. Investigators cite previous studies showing that empowerment of care givers of children with appropriate knowledge about child health related issues improves care practices resulting in overall improvement in child health status.

4. It is also important to note that improvement in knowledge is not enough to improve care practices and health outcomes; improvement in care practices and health status is very often influenced by the socio-economic and cultural settings in which the knowledge gain occurs. There is no dearth of literature that document difficulties in translating knowledge into better practices and health outcomes. Knowledge and practice of handwashing is a classic example. Therefore the setting in which the health education sessions are applied becomes an important consideration and including this in the Discussion part of the paper would perhaps make it a bit stronger. Future researchers in this area may benefit from this consideration.

Major compulsory revisions: not required

Minor essential revisions: not required

Discretionary revision: as stated above in Bullet#4.

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:

My response to above queries is 'NO'

I declare that I have no competing interests