Reviewer’s report

Title: Are marginalized women being left behind: A population-based study of institutional deliveries in Karnataka, India

Version: 1 Date: 7 December 2011

Reviewer: Padmini Murthy

Reviewer’s report:

1. Attaining further declines in MMR in India however, is likely to become increasingly difficult as ‘low-hanging fruit’ is exhausted - refer to page 6. This does not read well and needs to be rephrased to explain what the authors are trying to convey.

2. A study by UNICEF concluded that they contribute more than half of the country’s maternal mortality[17] refer to page 7 - When year needed.

3. The data presented in this paper was collected in a population-based study of mothers in 16 randomly selected rural villages in Mysore Taluk, a subdivision of Mysore District, Karnataka state, between August and September, 2008 - refer to page 7 no mention made of the number of mothers surveyed.

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 Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?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 except for minor rewriting which has been described in the next section

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'

Padmini Murthy MD, MPH, Dec 2011