Reviewer's report

**Title:** The gap in spousal education levels and its association with domestic violence in India and Bangladesh: A secondary data analysis of cross-sectional data from the NFHS-3 2005/06 and the BDHS 2007

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 20 February 2012

**Reviewer:** Olufunmilayo Fawole

**Reviewer's report:**

This is an interesting and focused study that investigates whether there is an association between spousal educational gap on prevalence as well as severity of domestic violence in India and Bangladesh. It contributes to scientific knowledge and would be useful in many societies in reducing DV. However to improve the quality of the work the following recommendations are given:-

**MINOR ESSENTIAL CORRECTIONS**

Title: Too long, should be more concise. Suggested title- Association between gap in spousal education and domestic violence in India and Bangladesh.

Abstract: Replace ‘simple’ with ‘univariate’. As this is a summary there is no need for the explanations on main dependent and independent variables. Rather simply state what 2 variables were been compared. Also delete all the explanations on cofactors rather you may wish to state what these cofactors were.

Introduction: This section is well written. Please change paper work to ‘research’ or ‘empirical data’.

Methods: Authors states that persons who were divorced or separated were excluded from the analysis. However this may introduce some bias because the separation and divorce may have been due to domestic violence which might have arisen as a result of the gap in education. May be best to state this as a possible limitation of the study.

In describing the independent variable, why was the ‘highest’ educational level restricted only to women? Why was it not also used for partners? This could have introduced some errors.

On page 6 line 8, selection of possible confounders was based on literature ‘review’ and not ‘overview’.

If data set permits may be good to explore effect of the extent of the gap i.e. whether small or large difference (for both positive and negative SEG). You don’t have to do this but may be good to mention it or explain why it was not done or recommend it for future studies.
Page 7- Authors can change ‘in our case’ to something else more suitable. The use of the word, ‘one’, appears throughout the write up and should be removed and all such sentences recasted.

Authors should please state the population of women of reproductive age in both countries to enable readers put number sampled and proportions obtained in proper perspective. It is also necessary to note the big difference in the populations being compared in the 2 countries (4,195 vs. 60,060) as this may affect some of the results obtained and inferences made.

Discussion: Change the expression ‘work at hand’ to ‘present study’, ‘believes to belief’ and ‘one can still assume’ to ‘it can be assumed’.

The second limitation stated is unclear. Recast. Also the limitation which mentions selective drop out needs further explanation including what was done to ameliorate it.

MAJOR COMPULSORY

A major correction that needs to be effected in the manuscript is that the public health implications of the findings are not discussed and recommendations are not made.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'