Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence and correlates of prenatal folic acid and iron supplementation among 21,889 pregnant women in Northern Tanzania: a registry-based study.

Version: 1 Date: 23 February 2012

Reviewer: Lisa Thompson

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Major compulsory revisions:
1. Background and conclusion sections need to be substantially reorganized.
2. There are editing/grammatical problems throughout; needs careful proofreading.
3. Adjusted OR’s no discussion of what variables were “adjusted for” in table or text. This needs to be clarified.
4. Use robust standard errors to account for multiple observations on same person
5. More needs to be made of the interesting finding that women with co-morbidities are least likely to supplement with FA and Fe—nut not sure how this relates to PN visits—did they visit more or less?

Minor Essential Revisions:

Abstract:
1. Provide ORs for any results presented.
2. How do you define lower socioeconomic status mentioned in abstract but not in main text?
3. Make a stronger conclusion. The most interesting finding was that women with co-morbidities are least likely to supplement with FA and Fe—should be stressed more.

Background:
1. Needs reorganization; currently is disjointed.
2. 1st para: First sentence is out of context, begs more explanation of methylation, etc. “At risk for pregnancy” is weird; should change to reflect that FA is recommended for women during child-bearing years, or preconceptually. It is not only that women have problems upregulating iron, they have menses, therefore have regular blood loss, a straightforward explanation for why women have more anemia.
3. 2nd para: WHO guidelines sentence is out of place. Add “enough” after (HbM8.5 g/dl), missing parentheses in citation 15.
Methods:
1. Folic Acid/Fe+: Make it clear this is binary outcome.
2. Sociodemographic correlates: Occupations in secondary level not described. There are missing parentheses.
3. Health indicators: move last sentence defining infections to third sentence...(malaria, anemia, infections). This section was confusing and might be better described in a figure. Check typos in this paragraph.

Statistical analyses: First sentence: Insert “ever” between “who” and “used”. Make it more clear that this is a dichotomous outcome. Sentence starting with contingency tables needs to be re-written to clearly state that each was analyzed separately (yes/no).

Results:
1. 2nd paragraph: adjusted OR’s, write at AOR: need to state what variables were “adjusted for” in table or text. Some sentences don’t provide AORs in text, need to add.

Discussion:
1. Needs reorganization.
2. Important finding is that those with co-morbidities aren’t supplementing. Should be discussed earlier than 5th paragraph. Is that after controlling for frequent visits? Need to state what was “adjusted for” in AORs.
3. 1st para: Add “at” before 43%. Instead of using small studies, can’t you look at country-wide DHS data for African/lower-income countries?
4. 2nd para: add “e”-- “choloroquin” spelled wrong. This med. is used for malaria, so not sure about this study, were they looking at anemia and malaria together?
5. 3rd para: check typos, missing words in “Dar Es Salaam” sentence.
6. 4th para, 1st sentence: insert were after co-morbidities. What is the difference between prenatal and antenatal? Isn’t this the same thing? This paragraph needs to be moved earlier and discuss number of visits in relation to co-morbidities.
7. 5th para: rewrite first sentence: “Notably, primiparous women with….were also found to…supplements during their first pregnancy….”
8. “Major strength” para, last sentence: “Some of the information…” Need to give percent, this is too vague.
9. Last para: Last sentence is a fragment.

Conclusion:
1. Last para: change “risk women” to “women at risk”

Table 2:
2. Spell out Dis.
3. Remove “” from Number of ANC visits and spell out “ANC”
Table 3:
1. In table 1 you use “mothers” and “fathers”. In table 3 you use “woman’s” and “husband’s” be consistent.
2. You lump together occupation to Professional, skilled and “other”. What does other include, that seems to be a big lump of farmers and business people..?
3. Remove “” from Number of ANC visits and spell out “ANC”
4. In footnote to table, list all of the adjustments made to these OR’s

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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