Reviewer's report

Title: Factors influencing attendance at treatment and prevention clinics by patients with podoconiosis in southern Ethiopia: a qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 12 September 2012

Reviewer: Gareth Davey

Reviewer's report:

The paper reports a qualitative investigation of factors influencing patients’ collection of treatment supplies from Podoconiosis outreach clinics in southern Ethiopia.

It is an important study for several reasons, especially high prevalence of Podoconiosis in Ethiopia with consequent long-term ill health in affected individuals. Research is urgently needed to inform effective treatment services.

The study furnishes useful information to tackle these problems, and adds a new perspective to the literature.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The Introduction is clear and informative. Reports in the literature of factors influencing collection of treatment supplies (e.g. stigma) could be reviewed in the Introduction to strengthen the study’s rationale.

2. Please clarify the theoretical framework and questions/hypotheses which guided the methodology and interpretation of findings.

3. Clarify additional inclusion criteria of participants.

4. To what extent were themes in the Results based on emergent themes which stemmed from the data and were constructed by participants? Did a theme list of questions (i.e. predetermined themes) guide discussions?

5. Clarify the sentence: “Data collection continued until no new information emerged through further interviews”. Was this ‘theoretical sampling’?

6. When did data collection take place (month, year)?

7. What reasons justified choice of interviews versus focus groups?

8. The following sentence is unclear: “We did not anticipate that the data collection techniques employed in this study would cause harm to the participants, the field work being limited to in-depth interviews and focus group discussions”. The study was an in-depth investigation of a potentially sensitive topic with ethical implications. Presumably, ethical issues or constraints specific to this method and special population were considered during ethics review.
9. The Results section is clearly presented with supporting data. However, further
detail and analysis would strengthen the study’s contribution. For example,
themes specific to each participant category; and demographic differences in
treatment compliance, given the demographic diversity of participants sampled.
Did men and women experience the same treatment compliance issues? A
thorough analysis of the data will enhance the study’s contribution.

Minor Essential Revisions

10. Limitations of the methodology can be considered.

11. Whilst the manuscript is well-written and structured, editing would improve its
clarity, readability and style.

By clarifying these issues, I think this paper could make a substantial contribution
to both the academic literature and public health in Ethiopia.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

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

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a
statistician.