Reviewer's report

Title: Female genital mutilation among Iraqi Kurdish women: A cross-sectional study from Erbil city, Iraq

Version: 2 Date: 31 January 2013

Reviewer: Els Leye

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential revisions
page 3, second last sentence: change to "support the practice"
page 4, 3rd paragraph, first sentence: change to "fgm is a deeply rooted"
page 5, third sentence: change to Type I mutilation is subdivided into
page 5, second paragraph, third sentence, change to "the soft tissue and are not visible..." Is the final sentence really necessary (comparison with male circumcision) as the paper does not discuss male circumcision at all
page 6, second paragraph, final sentence: change to a significant part of the population lives outside cities, where the high prevalence of illiteracy and poverty and presence of conservative Islam appear to play..."
page 7, first sentence, change to: "in Erbil city, to determine the patterns and types of FGM and to assess women's..."
page 7, third paragraph, change to age (15-49 years), and included married and unmarried women. Add comma after : at the delivery rooms of Erbil Maternity Teaching Hospital, 1000 women
page 8, 5th sentence: remove "friendly" and change sentence to: here we used open questions to encourage participants to talk about ... and whether they intend to mutilate their daughters or not.
page 9, second paragraph: please add "the" before majority (two times) and before "form of bleeding"
page 10, second paragraph: add "the" before women and intention
page 11, first paragraph, change second sentence to: have primarily relied on self-declared FGM status in interviews, to determine the prevalence of FGM. Remove the last sentence of this paragraph, or formulate clearer.
page 11, second paragraph, final sentence: remove "s" in infibulations.
page 11, third paragraph, first sentence, change to: The reports of high prevalence in Iraqi Kurdish region... add 's to women's rights groups.
page 12, first paragraph: the explanation of council and laws: do you think you can link this to your study, does it have any effect? see for example what you explain on page 17 on intentions of mutilating daughters that decrease.
page 12, link religion to data of your study (see for example page 17, where you
could integrate the second paragraph with this paragraph on page 12). Alter sentence on page 12, second paragraph as follows: As FGM is frequently linked to religious dictate, there should be ..."

page 13, first paragraph: remove "been" in that could have been disappeared; final sentence: change: that they were not circumcised but some evidence of FGM was found ...

page 13, paragraph 2 and 3: can you make these two paragraphs more concise? There also seems to be a contradiction: second paragraph you say that female traditional circumcisers rarely exist, while in the third you mention that in Iranian Kurdish area mutilation is carried out mainly by traditional circumcisors? alter first sentence op page 13, second paragraph to: In this study most mutilations were carried out by traditional birth attendants, and a limited proportion by traditional circumcisors and health care workers.

page 14, first paragraph, final sentence: I suggest to include, after your discussion on medicalisation, the percentages of FGM done by health professionals in Erbil, and point out that this is lower than XXX or higher than in XXX

page 15, first paragraph: shorten the paragraph and link it to the low prevalence of complications as found in your stury. change first sentence to: This evidently ... which show few complications.

page 15, second paragraph, sentence beginning with "Although": remove "ones"

page 15, final paragraph: change "such a finding indicates ..." and "In a study in Indonesia from 2003, the majority..."

page 16, first paragraph: change "The role of the father in making such decisions has not been studied in the Kurdish society so far. change: "However, there are instances where it is a joint decision by both mother and father with the latter only informed to obtain his agreement. Other decision-makers are female members, particularly grandmothers".

page 16, second paragraph: change "A relatively high proportion of participants supported the continuation of FGM, in particular among the mutilated patients. This suggests that the main provocative ..."

page 16/17: see my suggestion to add influence of law and advocacy activities on increased awareness about negative effects of FGM. change : "The proportion of the ever-married women in the age group 15-49 year who believes that circumcision should continue, ...

page 17, second paragraph: see my suggestion to integrate this paragraph with the second paragraph on page 12. Please check english in "religious dictate", and not "religion dictate"?

page 17, final paragraph: add title "study limitations. Change: "This study was not able to identify..."

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field
**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests