Reviewer's report

Title: Domestic violence against women in Eastern Sudan.

Version: 3
Date: 22 September 2014

Reviewer: Lotta Nybergh

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I sincerely thank the authors for their responses to my previous comments, and find that the manuscript has considerably improved. However, some final questions remain which I think merit attention prior to publication.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The formulation of the aim should reflect the cross-sectional study design (i.e. replace “socio-demographic factors affecting domestic violence”, which implies causality, with “socio-demographic factors associated with domestic violence” or something similar).

2. The added information on the questionnaire should also mention where the domestic violence items originated. Did the violence items stem from validated and widely used questionnaires such as the Conflicts Tactics Scales? If own violence items were constructed, the rational for this choice should be mentioned (with specific regard to the items assessing domestic violence).

3. How was the security of participants considered during the face-to-face household interviews, considering that the perpetrators might have been present when the interviews were conducted? Could this be included under ethical considerations?

4. In my opinion, it is still unclear why past-year domestic violence rates would affect recall bias more than violence experienced earlier in life. In the literature the opposite is often suggested, i.e. that past-year prevalence rates provide more robust estimates due to the fact that these events have taken place closer in time compared with events that have taken place further in the past and which are easier to forget. Hence, I believe that the authors should argue for why they believe that relying on past-year rates introduces more recall bias than earlier-in-life estimates as suggested by their current formulation (lines 219-222).

5. The conclusion stated in the abstract differs from the one stated at the end of the article; these should be harmonized. Also, could it be clarified if the authors recommend that further research be done with men who perpetrate violence against women to identify risk factors (for perpetration or victimization?), or if the authors would like to see research on men as victims of violence (lines 228-230)? Moreover, I suggest that the authors instead of mentioning a limitation of a cross-sectional study design in their conclusion add a sentence on policy recommendation, which also was include in the aim of their study. Alternatively,
the authors could mention which associated factors were associated with
domestic violence before qualifying with the limitation (e.g. “Domestic violence
was found to be associated with ZYX, however, causality cannot be determined
due to....”).

6. Since the univariable analyses are not considered significant by the authors
and they would not like to make these results available in the manuscript for the
readers, I suggest that all statements referring to the univariable analyses be
omitted from the manuscript.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. There remain several places in the manuscript where “sexual coercive” is
mentioned; I believe the authors wish to say “sexual coercion” for grammatical
clarity.

2. Under eligibility criteria, I think the authors meant to say that women were
“eligible”, not “illegible” (line 92)?

3. The term “believe privacy” (line 103) is unclear, what does “believe” refer to? I
suggest omitting this word or clarifying the sentence in some other way.

4. The sentence that includes “fear of the mother from divorce” (line 192-193)
should be clarified. Do the authors mean to say that the victimized women fear
leaving their husbands, or something else? I think this is an issue of enhancing
the sentence’s grammatical clarity.

Minor issues not for publication

1. “Further more” is one word (“furthermore”; line 224).

2. The discussion about policy (beginning on line 212) should begin with a new
paragraph.

3. The verb form in the conclusion (“recommended”) should be in the present
tense (“we recommend”; line 229).

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

**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.