Reviewer's report

Title: Gender Variations in Access, Choice to use and Cleaning of Shared Latrines; Experiences from Kampala Slums, Uganda

Version: 4 Date: 8 September 2014

Reviewer: Leanne E Unicomb

Reviewer's report:

This is a great study and the paper includes important data on an area that has not been thoroughly investigated. Findings can contribute to latrine interventions in low income countries elsewhere, in addition to Uganda.

English editing for improved flow; several spelling errors should be corrected in the next draft

Major Compulsory Revisions

Abstract
1. Methods section; check on how literature review comprised the methods.

Introduction:
2. First paragraph; what about the literature on gender variation in access, use and cleaning among all latrines in low income countries, not just those that are shared? I assume that there is little on this either- reinforcing the lack of literature on gender in WASH issues would be great to highlight, as a call to increase gender consideration in WASH intervention development, monitoring and policy.

3. Second paragraph; references 4, 14 and 15; do they show a link between poor sanitation and reproductive health issues. I found reference 4 and this is not the case. For menstrual hygiene management, there is an excellent systematic review by Colin Stumpfer. In the third sentence I would remove the reference to share of labor as this does not follow from the preceding sentences and possibly fits elsewhere The last sentence refers to disposal of human waste but I think it is meant to convey disposal of child excreta.

4. Third paragraph; I think the second sentence is meant to describe distant access to water rather than lack of access.

5. Final paragraph; I would put the definitions in the methods section.

Methods
6. Please include details on how the FGD and KII participants were selected.

7. It is not clear how the literature review was part of the methods, presumably to inform development of interview guideline themes. I would omit this.
8. How were the community transects conducted? Some more detail is required here.

9. The information included in the footnotes 1-4 should go into the text. Consider dropping footnotes 5 -7

10. Data management and analysis; There is a reference to 'various categories of subgroups'. Were they only men vs women or other groups? Please clarify.

Results

11. First paragraph; the first two sentences seem redundant.

12. Figure 1 seems to display quantitative data. I didn't find reference to these data being collected in the methods. Where these the statistics for those who participated in the interviews? More information is needed in the Figure title. Information on the type (pay per use, shared, improved, unimproved) would be useful.

13. Access to a sanitation facility, first paragraph; where are the verbatim quotes shown? These seem key findings. If this sentence is intended to orientate the reader, consider including this in the methods. There are a couple of quotes in the text- it would be great to see more to support the summary findings described.

14. Paragraph under the 'photo 3' insertion text: Can you describe how much the pay per use latrines cost?

15. Paragraph under the 'table 1' insertion text on page 13 is difficult to understand.

16. Figure II is not referred in the text and I am not clear on the use of this. Consider omitting.

17. Page 14, section on choice. I think the first sentence should read 'A key theme in the study was respondent considerations on choice in sanitation facility and how choice differed between men and women.

18. Page 15, paragraph above 'Table 2' insert text. It would be useful to have some contextual information on the distances from homes to latrines.

Discussion

19. First paragraph; I am not clear on what is being conveyed. I think the authors are suggesting that counting the number, type and condition of latrines as access does not provide the full picture.

20. Second paragraph; Include menstrual hygiene management as an important requirement of latrines for women, and the privacy required. Moreover, there is literature to support a greater focus on facility cleanliness among women, regardless of how often they use the same facility.
21. Page 19, first paragraph; there is considerable discussion of menstrual hygiene management, particularly the type of absorbents typically used. Since this theme was not explored (or at least not described), I would minimize the text, possibly adding it to the earlier paragraph on the decision making on latrine choice (Discussion, second paragraph).

22. Conclusion: Please provide suggestions on how these findings can inform future latrine upgrades or new latrines in these areas.

23. Table 1; find a more suitable term to 'drunkards'. I am not sure what is meant by 'obscure' facilities- possibly distant or hidden?

Minor Essential Revisions

Methods

24. First paragraph; change 'latrines being full' to 'latrine pits being full'. The authors mention diarrhea among children and I think the phrase 'high incidence of' is missing.

25. Did the authors explore post-defecation handwashing?

Results

26. Include the content of footnote 9 in the text.

References

27. The formatting seems inconsistent.

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.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interest.