Reviewer’s report

Title: Determinants of neonatal mortality in Nigeria: Evidence from 2008 Demographic and Health Survey.

Version: 2 Date: 8 November 2013

Reviewer: Chalapati Rao

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The author’s present a well written article describing, for the first time ever, important aspects of community based neonatal mortality in Nigeria. The methods for data collection are clearly stated, and the statistical analysis and results are straightforward. The study findings essentially confirm what has been observed in other developing countries, but nevertheless, it is important to characterise these relationships in the Nigerian context.

The following suggestions are made to add value to the Discussion.

Major compulsory revisions

1. Gestational age is an important factor associated with neonatal mortality. The Discussion section should include material on this issue along with some information as to why such data are difficult to obtain through retrospective surveys.

2. Similarly, in the case of low birth weight. Given the importance of these two variables, the authors should discuss alternate data collection methods to obtain such data at the community level. For e.g. vital registration of births and neonatal deaths: pregnancy Cohort follow up studies.

3. In addition to maternal characteristics and birth order status identified as important risk factors, there is a need to identify the more proximal risk factors or biological causes of death. For e.g. neonatal sepsis and hypothermia are important immediate causes of death in neonates, which are amenable to community based new born care interventions. Also, there have been successful efforts in identifying such causes of neonatal death using verbal autopsy methods. Hence the article should also advocate initiatives to collect data on causes of death in the community to enable the design and implementation of suitable interventions to reduce neonatal mortality rates in Nigeria.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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