Reviewer’s report

Title: Most women diagnosed with cervical cancer by a visual screening program in Tanzania completed treatment: evidence from a retrospective cohort study

Version: 1 Date: 9 January 2014

Reviewer: Lorraine Elit

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this work on VIA in Tanzania. The objectives were clearly stated.

- Major Compulsory Revisions
  1. Dar es Salaam is referred to many times in the document. Some explanation for whether this is a village, a city, a region and its relationship to ORCI would be helpful to put the comments in the manuscript into perspective. Is ORCI the only cancer centre in Dar es Salaam or are there other centres.
  2. It would be helpful to clearly define "followup". Is it the date of the VIA to the date of starting radiation?
  3. Tables - Usually a table has a total per section by column; however, you have chosen to do the total by row. It would be more meaningful to the reader to do it by column and variable.
  4. Table - age - is this mean or median?
  5. Is the year of screen the same as the year the cancer was diagnosed?

- Minor Essential Revisions
  1. Pg 5 Methods: The authors raise the issue of an ORCI screening card. Please define what personal health information is available on the ORCI screening card.
  2. Pg 7 - The first sentence was hard to follow - would suggest restructuring ie., In multivariable models (after adjustment for age and disease stage), education, timing...
  3. Pg 8 - Do all women get external beam radiation and only a variable amount of brachytherapy? It was not clear.
  4. Pg 8 - Is there a policy reason to explain the findings of the 15% decrease in radiation completion?
  5. It would be helpful to describe the VIA service ie., do women receive invitation to attend beginning at a certain age; are patients referred from other clinics ie., opportunitistic vs population based? How long has VIA screening been going on? Is it a once in a life time screen or every 5 years ect?

- Discretionary Revisions
1. The manuscript is long and there are 7 tables. Not sure if it is possible to make the manuscript more concise.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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'