Reviewer's report

Title: Induced abortion and effecting factors in Souteast Anatolian project (SEAP) region, Turkey: a cross sectional study

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Reviewer: Vibeke Rasch

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Background
In general I find the background of the study far too brief. Clarification about the legal situation of abortion in Turkey is missing and a more detailed introduction to the problem of induced abortion in Turkey supported by references is needed. A quick search on “medline” shows quite a number of studies on induced abortion have been performed in Turkey: E.g: Akadli B. (1985); Huntington D, Dervisoglu AA, Plie JM, Bumin C, Mensch B. (1996); Magnani RJ, Rutenberg N, McCann HG (1996); Guldal D, Semin S. (1999). ; Senlet P, Curtis SL, Mathis J, Raggers H. (2001); Karabacak O, Arslan M, Eren LC, Erdem A. (2001); Marston C, Cleland J. (2003). I will suggest that the authors briefly summarise what is known about the current situation of abortion in Turkey based on already published literature and then explain how their study can contribute with new evidence based upon existing experience.

The Authors state that induced abortions are one of the main reasons of deaths among women in reproductive age. This may be true in countries with restrictive abortion laws but I doubt whether that is the case in Turkey where abortion has been legalised for many years. This statement needs to be supported by data on the actual number of abortion related deaths in Turkey.

Para 3 and para 4 is a description of how the study was linked with Public Health Project of SEAP region and should be moved to material and method section.

Methods
This section should include a description of the study population (the two first paragraph in the result section). Nine pct of ever-married women reported at least one previous induced abortion. Turkey is known to have a high abortion rate: 45 abortions per 1,000 married women in 1988 and 25 per 1000 women in 1998 (Marston and Cleland 2003). Further, other studies have reported past abortion experience among women to be 33,6% and 55,3% respectively (Akadli, 1985; Guldal D 1999). I therefore have problems with the reported 9% of the women stating a past abortion experience. The low number may be caused by severe underreporting, rather than a fall in the abortion rate as the authors suggest. Many women find the issue of abortion stigmatising and my be reluctant to admit having undergone an induced abortion, in particular in a large survey which focuses on many different health related problems. Such underreporting may lead to selection bias. Perhaps older women who have given birth many times are more likely to report and induced abortion than younger women? This may lead to a wrong interpretation of the risk factors associated with induced abortion. The authors need to consider this problem.

Results
I find the statistics rather basic, especially since 10 out of 12 authors! have been involved in data analyses and statistical expertise.

Discussion
The discussion should to be fare more focused. The authors are referring to studies from many
areas that differ significant from Turkey: United States, Nigeria, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Singapore, and Malawi. It is for instance problematic to discuss the risk of abortion related death and then support the statement with data from Nigeria where abortion is illegal. Abortion related deaths in Nigeria are due to unsafe illegal abortion and not safe legal abortion, which I assume is the situation in Turkey. Further, housewives in Turkey are likely to differ from Danish married women. In Denmark there are hardly any housewives and I find the quotation from the Danish study wrong in the present context. I will suggest that the authors search PubMed or other relevant bibliographies thoroughly to find relevant articles which may help placing their results in a relevant context.

The paper is focusing on an interesting subject. However there are concerns about severe underreporting and selectionbias, which the authors should consider. Further, it is too unfocused and more illustrative references are needed. I can unfortunately not recommend that the paper is published in its present form.

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

None