Reviewer's report

**Title:** Differentials of fertility in North and South Gondar zones, Northwest Ethiopia: A comparative cross-sectional study

**Version:** 4  **Date:** 18 September 2008

**Reviewer:** K.S. Joseph

**Reviewer's report:**

Major Compulsory Revisions
No comments.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. On page 8, lines 5 and 9, the authors state that a minimum age of 25 years was set as an eligibility criterion for recruitment into the study. Further down the page (lines 1 and 4 from the bottom) they state that all women 15 to 49 were included in the study.

   Please correct or clarify this apparent discrepancy.

2. In the previous version of the manuscript, the authors described the study as a case-referent study and interpreted the odds ratios as relative risks "...women in rural villages were 2.8 times greater in having high fertility..."

   The study design and sample selection are more clearly described in the revised version of the manuscript. The sampling (which was not directly based on high or low fertility status) resulted in a study sample with 42% of the women falling into the high fertility group. This high prevalence of the outcome means that the odds ratios from the logistic model do not approximate relative risks. Thus interpretation of the odds ratios as representing the differential in the likelihood of high fertility between index and reference categories is appropriate only insofar as likelihood is taken to mean odds (and not probability).

**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