Reviewer’s report

Title: Determinants of infant growth in Eastern Uganda: a community-based cross-sectional study

Version: 3 Date: 28 October 2008

Reviewer: Yves Martin-Prevel

Reviewer’s report:

Review of the re-submitted BMC manuscript entitled:
“Determinants of infant growth in Eastern Uganda: a community-based cross-sectional study”

The authors have to be congratulated for their huge efforts in revising analyses and the writing of their paper. The article now reads very clear and much more convincing than earlier versions. I have only a few minor points to raise.

Major compulsory revisions

None

Minor compulsory revisions

1. The construction of a household wealth index through a PCA is now well explained. However, the choice of categorization that the authors made (top quintile / 2 mid quintiles / 2 low quintiles) sounds a bit awkward. Usually, to split the sample into three categories one used rather the tertiles. It would be worth indicating why another choice was made. This might be due to a particular shape of the distribution, for example.

Discretionary revisions

2. Abstract: for clarity, at the end of the result section of the abstract, it could be worth adding units (Z_scores) after the figures 0.58 and 0.20

3. In the previous review I had pointed out that, in the abstract, the wording “associated to linear growth” was not clear enough. This was because the corresponding sentence referred to one of the main results of the study and therefore, in the abstract, the reader needed to know how the study reached this result (through comparison of rates of stunting or through comparison of mean LAZ). Consequently, the authors replaced the term ‘linear growth’ with ‘length/height-for-age’ throughout the manuscript. However the term ‘linear growth’ is totally understandable and even better suited when general facts are dealt with, as for example in the introduction (e.g. first line of the second paragraph of the background section).

4. Page 7: references to figures and tables should be given in the results section, not in the methods section.
5. End of the methods section: The authors said: “Village number (113) was set as the sampling unit using the ‘svyset’ command in Stata”. This is correct and sound. However, the authors could state more explicitly that this is a means for taking into account the intra-cluster correlation due to the sampling design. The sentence could be “The cluster effect arising from the sample design was accounted for by setting the village number as the sampling unit using the ‘svyset’ command in Stata”.

6. Table 1: the title is a bit long; something like “Mean anthropometric indices and comparison according to sex” seems to give the whole necessary information if you add a footnote to specify that the t-test was performed to compare values of boys and girls. The rest of the information is already self-understandable from titles of the columns and rows.

7. The same remark applies to the titles of other tables. The title should be more concise and additional information, when necessary, should be given in footnotes.

8. Discussion: one or two references could be given when the authors evoke possible reverse causality, as it’s a well described phenomenon in the literature.

9. Conclusion: instead of referring to “mothers” as the targets for educational programmes, the authors may refer to “pregnant women” since early feeding practices are at stake and it has been proven that counseling during pregnancy is more efficacious in this case.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests