Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of IUCD discontinuation and its associated factors: Findings from a retrospective study with clients of a social franchising network in Pakistan.

Version: 2 Date: 11 January 2012

Reviewer: Sara Husain

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Methods: Calculation of sample size has not been discussed. This needs to be addressed clearly stating the assumptions made.

2. Results: A comparison between users and non-users of IUCD is necessary to compare how the groups are different and identify socio-economic factors which may influence decision making.

3. Conclusion: Strengthening the counselling component is an excellent policy option and needs to be better explained with emphasis on existing FP programs in the country and how these may use the results of the study and build on counselling skills of healthcare providers. Also, experience of other countries which have built on counselling services should be added as supportive evidence.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Abstract: There is no rationale for the conduct of the study. Mentioned in Methods as “high discontinuation rates” but there is no supporting evidence indicating exactly how high the discontinuation rate is for IUCDs versus other contraceptive methods.

Duration of the study is not mentioned.

2. Background:

Para 2: There is no data to prove the “effectiveness” of IUCDs and why countries should “renew interest in the method”

3. Context:

Table 1: Table title should suggest content of the table. Also reconsider information being shown in the table. The same in narrative form in preceding text would be more useful in building a case for contraception need.

4. Rationale:

Para 1: The partnership model is being referred to by different names “MSS Private Provider network”, “PPP/Suraj network”. These need to be addressed uniformly throughout the article.
Para 1: Various acronyms FWM, PSPs are used without any explanations.

5. Results:
Para 1: There is no comment on the rising trend of IUCD removal over time and no attempt to explain this trend. This needs to be explored to understand why discontinuation continues to rise over time.

Discretionary Revisions

1. Sampling:
Para 1: What is meant by “healthy client flow?”

2. Discussion:
Para 1: “The method is popular in a group with no formal education”. This is to be expected in rural areas where the Suraj programme is focused. This sentence needs to be re-phrased, as it would be more meaningful if it was an urban setting.

If education status is of interest, education levels between continued users and those who discontinued IUCDs should be compared instead.

Para 3: How does a similar discontinuation rate among voucher users and paying clients indicate a “strong voucher distribution mechanism”?

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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