Reviewer's report

Title: Change over time in factors associated with domestic violence by intimate partner in Egypt: analysis of two surveys

Version: 3 Date: 13 May 2008

Reviewer: Farah Ahmad

Reviewer's report:

Manuscript Title: Change over time in factors associated with domestic violence by intimate partner in Egypt: analysis of two surveys

The authors have revised the manuscript by incorporating some changes that were suggested including the exclusion of ‘help seeking’ variables as different aspects were measured in 1995 and 2005.

The revised paper still needs to take a different approach in reporting of the Results and the Discussion due to different questions used to measure wife beating in 1995 and 2005 DHS. The revised version still compares the rates of wife beating measured in 1995 and 2005 with an aim to examine “change overtime”. For example, the first paragraph in the discussion section states "Information from the two DHS conducted 10 years apart in Egypt was evaluated to investigate changes over time in the incidence and factors associated with wife beating. There are several important findings in this study. First, there was little change over time in the reported incidence of wife beating..."Unfortunately, the authors can’t make any conclusions about such “change overtime” though they dearly wish to do so.

In my view, the authors should take a critical approach. Starting from the introduction section, they should include a criticism of the use of inconsistent measures in the national survey to assess wife beating in 1995 and 2005. Then, they should accordingly describe their research objectives, such as: What are the rates of wife beating in 1995 and 2005 using single-item and multiple-item measures? What are the significant risk makers for wife beating in 1995 and 2005? To make the inconsistent measurement more clear for the audience, please include a table with rates of “each” of the items - with full wording - used in 2005 and
1995.

For the discussion section, the authors should briefly present the rates of 1995 and 2005 and then focus more on different possible (even counter intuitive) interpretations of these rates in order to highlight the limitations posed by inclusion of different measures in the two national surveys. At the same time, they should discuss the historical significance of this change from single-item to multiple-item measurement as a reflection of increasing acknowledgment of wife beating at the national level. Perhaps, a discussion on international efforts to use similar measures could be added here (e.g. WHO multi-site study etc.) or how public health research and interventions have moved overtime from “physical” violence to inclusion of “emotional and psychological” abuse. The part of discussion on risk markers could then discuss the “similarities” and “differences” in the risk markers for 2005 and 1995. The discussion should also include implications for public health initiatives.

I hope that authors will find these comments useful!