Reviewer’s report

Title: Policy Maker and Provider Knowledge, Attitudes regarding the Provision of Emergency Contraceptive Pills within Lao PDR

Version: 3 Date: 4 May 2010

Reviewer: Davida Becker

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript is much improved over the last version. However, there are a few areas where additional changes are still needed. In addition, before publication the manuscript should be reviewed for typos and English language usage.

Minor essential revisions

Title
• The authors should add the word “and” between knowledge and attitudes

Introduction
• The sentence “some other forms of contraception…were discussed but not practiced due to acceptability of methods” is unclear. One suggestion is to reword this as follows: “Some other forms of contraception such as vasectomy are discussed by public sector providers, but not commonly used by the population because of low levels of acceptability.”
• The sentence describing the MOH policy on ECPs which begins “The policy aimed to promote information about emergency contraception and to ensure the availability of the method at specified health facilities” needs to specify which facilities. The current sentence is vague.
• In the following sentence, rather than saying drug approval is a prerequisite for the drug to be officially distributed through “different channels” the authors should specify which specific channels, for example, the public sector.
• In this same paragraph, the authors’ state there may be a lack of motivation to get ECP drugs registered. Following this sentence, the authors should clarify what steps need to be taken for ECPs drugs to get registered.
• In the sentence where the authors state dedicated ECPs are currently sold at private pharmacies and clinics, the authors should clarify how these methods are being sold. Since no companies are distributing ECPs in Lao it is unclear how they are being sold at all.
• In the sentence “The private clinics play an important role in providing accessible sexual reproductive health services” the authors should reword the sentence to state “The private clinics and pharmacies play an important role in providing accessible sexual reproductive health services.”
Methods

• The authors should change the sentence in the second paragraph to state “the target groups of this study were policy makers, health providers and staff of public and private clinics.”

• In the paragraph on data collection eliminate the underlying of the word “the.” Also, reword the second sentence to state “…10 health providers at private clinics”

Results

• In the section on barriers to use, there is a statement that nearly all policy makers and health providers are aware that there is a political barrier to ECPs. The next statement says that the Ministry does not currently allow use of ECP in Lao PDR and there is no policy regarding its use. These statements are confusing because the introduction indicates that in 2005 a policy was introduced by the Ministry of Health to promote ECPs. Perhaps the authors are trying to state that the policy makers and providers interviewed in this study were not aware of this policy. If so, this should be clarified.

• In the section on availability, the authors should reframe their first sentence to state: “Overall, most interviewees predicted more positive…”

Discussion

• In the fifth paragraph of the discussion, the authors state that ECP was included in the National Reproductive Health Policy in 2004, but the introduction says the year this policy was introduced was 2005. Please reconcile these two dates.

• The authors should add as a limitation that no pharmacists were interviewed in this study.

Tables

• There is no Table 1, just Table 2. Table 2 should be renumbered.

Discretionary revisions

• If there are data available on the percent of women who receive family planning care through the public sector versus through private sources such as clinics and pharmacies this could be added to the introduction. It would be important background.

• I think the Annex and Table 2 could be cut from the paper. I don’t think they add much.

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:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests