Reviewer's report

Title: Surgical and medical second trimester abortion in South Africa: a cross-sectional study

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Reviewer: stavros sifakis

Reviewer's report:

This is a well-designed cross-sectional study that describes the attitudes of women in South Africa towards surgical and medical abortion in second trimester and directly compares outcomes between these methods aiming to demonstrate the current concept about this issue in developing countries. Main strengths of this article are the structured method of recruitment and data collection and the well-presented detailed findings in the result section. Possible limitations such as the lack of follow-up and the fact than no hospital offered both types of treatments are reported in the discussion section. I think that this article should be accepted for publication as it compares medical and surgical second trimester abortion techniques in a low-resource setting but the conclusions about the clinical superiority of one technique over the other should not be generalized. Furthermore, it has to be emphasized that the addition of data from long-term studies that will focus on the comparison of the frequency of late complications of medical and surgical methods of abortion would offer more valuable and definite results.

Some particular comments:
- Abstract: “Both dilatation….., however there are no studies..”. Please use “there is only a limited number of studies…”
- The authors acknowledge that a limitation of the study is the “lack of follow-up”. There are studies that support that medical protocols of abortion are associated with lower risk of long-term complications compared to the surgical methods, for example endometrial adhesions. The authors should provide a comment in their Discussion for this possible benefit of the medical abortions, which is not investigated in this study.
- The Conclusion is too general. I would recommend including some particular comments/conclusions derived from the results of this study.

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'