Reviewer’s report

Title: Diffusion of Subsidized ACTs in Accredited Drug Shops in Tanzania:
Determinants of Stocking and Characteristics of Early and Late Adopters

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Reviewer: Francis Wafula

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Overall comment:
A well thought out and written paper that touches on an area that has scarcely
been studied. ‘Kudos’ to the authors for weaving in the theories seamlessly! I had
no major issues with the paper, but would suggest the authors fine-tune a few
areas

Major compulsory revisions
None

Minor essential revisions

Background
1. Page 3 paragraph 3: Reference number 18 sticks out like a sore thumb. The
authors could try and rewrite the sentence to match the previous discussion on
diffusion of medicines. Did the authors mean the complexities in the African
market make it hard to understand diffusion?

Methods
1. Page 6: The ‘Regression Methods/Tests of Association’ section. The authors
explain the backward selection of covariates well. However, they don’t say what
they considered to be a significant/important p-value. They could have stuck to
the popular p<0.05 cut-off, could have tightened it a bit (for a parsimonious
model), or they may well have loosened it (some people argue that lower cut-offs
may fail to identify important variables (e.g. the Hosmer and Lemeshow
argument). Maybe just to add a sentence explaining the thinking here…..

Results
1. Page 6: Sentence two reads like a repetition from the methods section.
2. Overall comment on results. The odds ratios vary in magnitude, with some
showing ‘almost’ borderline importance, and other showing a clear difference.
May be helpful to use appropriate adjectives when discussing the results (to give
an indication of the magnitude, e.g. highly, mildly/marginally etc etc). There’s a
strong push by epidemiologists/medical statisticians to move away from words
like ‘statistical significance’, and instead focus on discussing the magnitude of the
differences. I know there’s little consensus on this, so, I will let the author’s make
the final decision on how they want to put it....

Discretionary revisions

1. Background, Paragraph 1: I agree with the ‘possible reasons’ listed for unavailability of medicines at private shops. However, it may be helpful to cite a study or two that have talked about this in greater detail (e.g. the reviews below)
   (i) Brieger et al, 2004: Interventions to Improve the Role of Medicine Sellers in Malaria Case management for Children in Africa
   (ii) Goodman et al, 2007: Medicine sellers and malaria treatment in sub-Saharan Africa: what do they do and how can their practice be improved?
   (iii) Wafula et al, 2012: Examining characteristics, knowledge and regulatory practices of specialized drug shops in Sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review of the literature

2. The ‘Rogers’ citation (number 8) would read better at the end of the sentence. Same to ‘Bass (citation 9)

3. Page 3 paragraph 3: Missing word in the first sentence (‘in’ Sub-Saharan Africa)

4. Page 3 paragraph 4: Sentence 4 is a bit heavy. Maybe just say ‘Network analysis has been extensively used’? Just a thought.....

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:

No competing interests