Reviewer's report

Title: Improving service uptake and quality of care of integrated maternal health services: The Kenya Kwale District Improvement Collaborative

Version: 2 Date: 10 January 2014

Reviewer: Eva Kaltenthaler

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Major compulsory revisions
1. Page 6 “The quality of ANC is very poor.” What does this mean? What would very good ANC look like?
2. The authors define this as a retrospective study which I do not think is correct and this word should be removed.
3. There is not enough detail as to how the interventions were developed and implemented. For example, what training did the quality improvement team have? How were the 20 indicators chosen? What exactly was the “collaborative improvement approach”? How were the key change actions deemed “successful”? I appreciate that additional files have been used to provide information but there needs to be enough detail in the paper for the reader to understand how the study was conducted.
4. The results are not linked to final outcomes- Did the changes have an impact on perinatal mortality/morbidity, incidence of malaria in pregnancy, rise in Hb levels, change in the incidence of tetanus for example? Outcomes such as these may not have been measured but this should be mentioned as a limitation of the research and areas for future research.
5. It is not clear from reading the paper what the authors would suggest were the most useful interventions and why. What would they recommend to other districts (and low income countries) as the best interventions to try and why?
6. Although there were impressive improvements in the outcomes reported we can not be sure that the improvements were due to the interventions as there was no control group. Are there other factors that need to be considered? This at least needs to be mentioned in the discussion section. The only way to be clearer about this would be to conduct a randomised controlled trial and there are of course resource constraints involved with this.

Minor essential revisions
7. Some grammatical errors are evident in the paper. The paper would benefit from proof reading.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.