Reviewer's report

Title: How do women judge quality? Determinants of perceived quality of obstetric care in rural Tanzania: a cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 28 August 2014

Reviewer: Catherine St. Hill

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. The authors should clearly establish the relationship between the importance of knowing how pregnant women rate the quality of obstetric care and the central problem stated in the manuscript that obstetric care facilities cannot deliver BEmONC. This correlation will strengthen the significance of their research.

2. Additional interpretations of the observed results should be more robustly discussed to lend support the conclusions. For instance, could multiparity versus uniparity influence a woman’s perception of care because of a patient’s familiarity with a particular facility? Do other languages spoken in Tanzania in addition to English reflect a woman’s socioeconomic status and could this be a bias that the survey used to collect results was confined to Swahili and English? How does experiencing a complication affect a pregnant woman’s perceived quality of care?

3. The proximity of a pregnant woman to a health care facility is a variable that may impact the results and should be discussed in the Conclusion section.

4. On page 12, line 17 the authors imply that “Health worker confidence may be perceived by women as arrogance, or over-confident health workers may work quickly or communicate poorly with the patient”. The basis and evidence for this assertion should be included.

5. Throughout the manuscript, terms are not clearly defined. What definition was used for the term "minors" that gave assent? On page 13, line 5, the authors state that they surveyed pregnant women who reported disrespect or abuse. How were “disrespect or abuse” defined and objectively assessed? What are the definitions of a hospital, health center, and dispensary in Tanzania in terms of the level and expected quality of care that can be received at each facility? On average, how many patients are seen, how many obstetric staff members are employed and what levels of experience do they have at each of these facilities?

6. A description of the criteria that were used to choose study facilities should be included in the methods (inclusion versus exclusion criteria).

7. The Conclusions section should include a description of the type and extent of
training that obstetric care staff receive and the potential impact on pregnant women’s perceptions of the quality of care received.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures or the wrong use of a term which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. The acronym ANC is used throughout the manuscript but is not defined and therefore should be clearly described.

2. In the Abstract, Methods section line 3, it should be clearly stated that women are delivering neonates since what they are delivering is not clearly defined.

3. In the background section, line 2, instead of “…under five…” the sentence should be “…mortality under 5 years of age…”

4. Figure legends should be included with more detail to accurately describe each figure.

5. The label for Figure 3 should be associated with the graph rather than presented on separate pages. Also the text “Figure 3” is too small to be read clearly.

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

None

**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