Reviewer’s report

Title: Primary Healthcare worker knowledge related to prenatal and immediate newborn care, a cross sectional study in Masindi district, Uganda

Version: 1 Date: 1 October 2013

Reviewer: Larissa Jennings

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript examined provider knowledge on prenatal and immediate newborn care, a topic of central importance in the area of health services care improvement in developing countries. Overall, the manuscript is well organized and clearly written. The introduction, in particular, succinctly and seamlessly outlines the background and impetus of the study. However, some writing edits are needed for grammar and punctuation. Other minor recommended revisions are as follows:

(1) Discretionary Revisions
- Depending on how the data were coded, it would be insightful to analyze provider knowledge according to “% correct out of the total number of knowledge items” or assess the prevalence of incorrect or missing knowledge for key items.

(2) Minor Essential Revisions
- MCQ should be spelled out to represent ‘multiple choice questions’ (page 7).
- The last sentence of the ‘Data Analysis’ section is a bit awkward and should be re-word, excluding the terms ‘hence’, ‘tends’, and ‘as such’ (page 8). A sentence should also be included to describe how the exact cut-off for the significance level was derived.
- Some words should be capitalized such as “Lancet Series” and “Table 1” while others need not be capitalized such as “low birthweight” (page 7).
- Additional copy-editing is needed to include correct punctuation. The authors commonly links two sentences with a semi-colon “;” which (given the number of them) is distracting to the reader. The same is true for including several “however”s in the middle of sentences.
- Sometimes LBW is used. Other times it is spelled out. This should be made to be consistent (page 9).
- It would be helpful in the results section for ‘Factors associated with...’ to describe the trend or direction of findings – not just merely stating if it’s statistically significant or not. For example, in ‘cadre of health worker’, the reader could see the trend if the comparable point estimates are presented or the difference indicator (not just the p-value alone). In fact, this would benefit all of the ‘Results’ section since currently there is only mention of findings being significant or not significant.

- Page 10, ‘Level of care’ – the lead word of the paragraph ‘again’ should be removed.

- Describe the authors’ rationale for comparing knowledge of providers by level of care and unit of assignment.

- There is a spelling error in the first sentence of the ‘Discussion’ Section.

- Please include a table of the item level responses (% correctly responding for each item).

- The authors claim that the lack of differences in knowledge by cadre of health worker indicate that task delegation is possible (‘Discussion’ Section, page 12). However, I recommend this statement is revised given that knowledge was found to be low for all cadres. Thus, delegating to an equally less knowledgeable provider is not preferred.

- Page 12, the sentence “It is therefore likely that when this opportunity……” is difficult to follow and understand. Please rephrase.

- Page 14, the paragraph on referrals should be completely revised/rephrased. This article measured provider knowledge. It did not measure provider competency and skill. Therefore, it’s premature to imply that the quality of care provided to women was inadequate – using terms such as “detrimental” or “completely compromised”. In fact, throughout the discussion – please take more care not to jump to conclusions about the specific care and counseling provided to women based on the ‘provider knowledge’. Sentences in the discussion section implying this should be re-worded to note that – it’s possible, holds implications, suggests that, etc.

- Knowledge scores may be low because the questionnaire items were not validated, unclear, not well administered, too long, etc. This should be noted in the limitations section.

- Tables – include total sample size

- The results section should speak to the odds ratios in Table 4. These odds ratios with 95% CIs should be presented in the text.

- The title has typographical errors. Instead, it should read: “Primary healthcare worker knowledge related to prenatal and immediate newborn care: a cross sectional study in Masindi District, Uganda.

(3) Major Compulsory Revisions

None
1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes
3. Are the data sound? Yes
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes
9. Is the writing acceptable? No, some editing of the punctuation and English language/grammar is needed.

**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:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.