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: 8 October 2013

Reviewer: Heather Sipsma

Reviewer's report:

The authors have identified an important gap in the literature, and their manuscript could be an important contribution to the field. There are some concerns, however, that I have about the methodology before I can assess whether or not it merits publication.

Major Compulsory Revisions

INTRODUCTION
1. Please expand upon the previous literature to further describe what has already been established about health workers and cite the relevant literature.
2. Have any other studies examined health worker knowledge? It seems like understanding health worker training is very closely (hopefully!) related to knowledge; it would be helpful to review literature on this as well.

METHODS
1. The last sentence of the “Study site” paragraph is not clear to me. Could you please rephrase and indicate what the numbers in parentheses mean?
2. I suggest combining the description about the health care facilities with the “Study site” paragraph as this information would be helpful to understand the description of the facilities presented earlier in the Methods section.
3. Why is it relevant to examine prenatal knowledge among health workers assigned to out-patient or children’s departments? Please explain.
4. From where were the knowledge questions obtained? Have they been used previously in other literature or field work? Please describe further how these were answered and measured.
5. Was “years of service” specific to his/her role as a nurse, midwife or nursing assistant?
6. The operationalization of the variables should be moved to earlier in the Methods section where the authors describe their measurement.

RESULTS
1. Was level of knowledge associated with years of service?
2. Were there data on their training? This information could help readers better understand what may be possible implications of low knowledge levels if
associated – or not associated – with training.

3. Did the authors construct multivariate models? It is mentioned in the analysis section, but I do not see the results of which mentioned in the Results.

DISCUSSION
1. I recommend that the authors consider removing some of the repeating of results throughout the Discussion. For example, the first three sentences of the bottom paragraph on P. 12 are simply retelling results.

2. The differences between the knowledge of health workers deployed in maternity, antenatal and family planning clinics and those deployed in other areas in the clinic does not seem compelling. It is not clear why health workers assigned to the children’s ward, for example, would have the same level of knowledge in prenatal care and the immediate postnatal period. Could the authors explain their hypotheses here and discuss the implications better? Otherwise, they may want to consider removing this comparison.

3. Please describe recommendations based on your findings.

4. Is it appropriate to say “health workers who are in regular contact with pregnant women and newborn babies…” when some of these workers as assigned to other clinic areas? More clarification here would be helpful.

Minor Compulsory Revisions

INTRODUCTION
1. Be more specific and clear about your references to the “millennium target”, MDG, “lancet series,” and “Global Newborn Action.”

2. Instead of “preventive educational messages and accurate treatment”, a better word choice may simply be “education and treatment”

3. Please insert a comma after “…with a health worker” and “…at the health facility [10]” in the first sentence of the third paragraph.

4. Please begin a new paragraph at “This study specifically aims…” and use “to assess” instead of “at assessing”.

METHODS
1. Please spell out MCQ.

2. It seems like “or ‘less knowledgeable’” needs to be removed from the middle sentence of the data analysis section beginning with “Within each of the themes…”

RESULTS
1. The authors use the term “knowledgeable” in the Results section – as being knowledgeable or not, but in the Methods section, they suggest it’s “more knowledgeable” This inconsistency should be resolved.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.