Reviewer's report

Title: Health Services Quality as a determinant of the use of intrauterine devices in Egypt

Version: 3  Date: 12 April 2006

Reviewer: Saumya RamaRao

Reviewer's report:

General
Essential Revisions: There are three main areas that the authors should work on to strengthen the paper: the background section to demonstrate clear understanding of the definitions of quality and methods to measure them; greater discussion of the results; and inclusion of relevant citations. Examples from each area are given below to illustrate the point.

A. Background section: Clearly demarcate supply and demand side factors—for example, move the paragraph on the socio-economic characteristics of the user after all supply side/quality of care descriptions are done.

What next?: Publish after all the revisions are undertaken

Level of Interest: Useful to decision-makers

Please read both the Koenig et al and RamaRao et al. papers again to correctly refer to them. For example, Koenig et al.’s definition of quality does not include “physical condition of clinics offering family planning services”; RamaRao et al.’s paper refers to contraceptive continuation not adoption.

B. Results and discussion: In addition to the reporting of direction of effects and their statistical significance, the authors need to explain to readers the implications of the findings. The results could benefit from a fuller explanation; for example, why is it that quality of care is more important in public vs non-public sector facilities (refer to page 12 and tables)? What is it about these facilities that could explain? What does it mean “…is driven by quality of counseling and examination room. Also the country has been pursuing….family planning.” It still puzzles me why greater choice of methods is associated with lower contraceptive use (see Table 4). Would your results be affected if you added an additional control for user characteristics such as the respondent’s intention to space or limit childbearing?

C. Citations: Refer to Ali et al. (2001) paper that uses similar data sets from Egypt to discuss pill continuation; compare your methodology and findings with this analysis. Cite original Bruce 1990 Studies in Family Planning paper while discussing the Bruce-Jain quality of care framework instead of Barry (1996). Mention other work that has linked readiness of services with current contraceptive use—e.g., Mensch et al. (1996) in Studies in Family Planning and Feyisetan and Ainsworth (1996).

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

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests