Reviewer's report

Title: Household headship and child-death experience by mothers: Evidence from Nepal

Version: 1 Date: 22 February 2010

Reviewer: Margaret Elizabeth Kruk

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Review of “Household headship and child-death experience by mothers: Evidence from Nepal”

Margaret E. Kruk, MD, MPH

General comments

This is an interesting paper that helps to address a gap in the literature. However, the model should be augmented with other important variables for the inference to carry weight. Please see below for details but place of delivery, more specificity around wealth, other measures of women’s status are examples of omitted variables. Specific comments follow.

Specific comments

Abstract: “seen” not “been” is probably what that author means. Words are missing (birth “to” three or more children), child death is not typically written as child-death. There are minor spelling and grammar errors throughout.

p. 2-4 It would be important to include a description of family household structure in Nepal to help put the findings in context. How frequently do women live with their husbands’ families, etc?

p. 4. Do you mean random sampling? Systematic sampling sampling implies picking the nth item of a list.

p. 4. I would suggest keeping the wealth quintiles separate—that is put all five quintiles in the model as this is a critical variable in the determination of child death and we could gain more insight with a more disaggregated version of the variable.

p. 10 The -2log likelihood does not increase very much after addition of the headship variable. Could you add other DHS variables on the status of women in the household? If significant, these would strengthen your hypothesis.

p. 10 It would also be important to include place of delivery—facility versus home as this is an important determinant of early neonatal mortality and this variable is reported in the DHS.
The discussion of Hindu women is not correct. You have already accounted for age at marriage in your model and religion is still a significant factor—thus this is not the reason for higher child death rates among Hindu women.

**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:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests