Reviewer’s report

Title: Community perceptions of rape and child sexual abuse: a qualitative study in rural Tanzania

Version: 2  Date: 30 January 2014

Reviewer: Zarina Nahar N Kabir

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

The topic of the paper is highly relevant and valuable across the world from physical and mental health perspective as well as human rights perspective.

The paper aims to explore perception of a specific community in a rural district in Tanzania regarding rape of women and children to understand

1. What perpetuates or hinders disclosure of events
2. What support may be provided to support survivors of sexual violence

Major concerns:

# The authors show a tendency of making broad generalizations in the discussion, such as about constraints of help seeking, factors related to sexual violence. The data of the study does not provide a basis to make such generalizations. It is important to note that the study aimed to explore perceptions of a certain community regarding rape of women and children. The discussion should remain focused on how these perceptions are to be understood and contextualized in order to address the aims of the study.

# The presented data does not provide much information about the participants’ perceptions regarding support that may be provided to survivors of sexual violence. The data barely touch upon the issue and delves into condemning such offences. This does not necessarily support survivors who have already experienced sexual violence, rather allude to how such offences are to be viewed upon. Hence, the second research question of the study is barely addressed.

Other concerns:

# Results:

- Page 13, para 1: The authors report that “rape of a child perpetrated by a known person or relative was considered acceptable”. The supporting quote does not suggest so. If there is any data that suggest this then please provide quote to back up this statement.

# Discussion:

- Page 22, para 1: Explain secondary victimization.
- Page 24, para 2: The discussion about young girls engaging in sexual relationship with older men to escape from poverty and loneliness does not seem
to be based on any data presented in the results section. This needs to be corrected, either by revising the discussion or by presenting related data in the results section.

Minor Essential Revisions

# Trustworthiness:

- It is stated that prolonged engagement of the first author at the community helped to build trust with the participants. What was the length of this prolonged engagement?

- That two of the authors (PA & ED) are obstetrician/gynaecologist is mentioned as part of the study’s trustworthiness. Why is this advantageous from the perspective of trustworthiness?

# Language: While the language is generally very good, there are lapses in some places. I suggest that the language is checked.

**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.