Reviewer's report

Title: Community referral in Home Management of Malaria in Western Uganda: A case series study

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Reviewer: Peter Winch

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Manuscript number:
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1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
   Yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
   Yes
3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
   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. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes
7. Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes

Suggested Revisions

1. The referral system is well described, but there are a few additional details that would be useful to the reader in order to compare the findings of this study with other studies on community-to-facility referral (this study is an example) or facility-to-facility referral such as Kalter, H.D., Salgado, R., Moulton, L.H., Nieto, P., Conteras, A., Egas, M.L., & Black, R.E. (2003). Factors constraining adherence to referral advice for severely ill children managed by the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness approach in Imbabura Province, Ecuador. Acta Paediatr, 92(1), 103-110:
   - Do the drug distributors use a referral slip, or is the referral done verbally only?
   - Do the health facilities provide any immediate feedback to the DD on the outcome of referral, for example through a “counter-referral” slip?
   - Which of the seven models of CHW management of sick children does the DD system in Uganda best approximate, from this same paper by Winch et al.?
   - Once referred children arrive at a health center, are they attended to more quickly because they have been referred?
   - Do DD receive regular supervisory visits, and if so, do supervisors provide feedback on their referral success or on the outcome of referral?
   - Do DD make follow-up visits in the home after children return from a referral facility?
2. Approximately what is the average distance between the home and the health facility for children who were referred? An educated guess would be sufficient. Are there any major physical barriers to reaching the health facilities such as rivers or mountains? No comment was made about the topography of the study site.

3. It would be interesting to have the authors compare their findings on referral constraining factors to those described in the following papers, including the conceptual framework in Macintyre 1999.


4. What is the range in rates of referral compliance by drug distributor and/or community? Does the variation seem to be related to geography or the skill and motivation of the DD?

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions  
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field  
**Quality of written English:** Acceptable  
**Statistical review:** No  
**Declaration of competing interests:**  
I declare that I have no competing interests.