Reviewer's report

Title: Socio-cultural and individual determinants for motivation of sexual and reproductive health workers in Papua New Guinea and their implications for male circumcision as an HIV prevention strategy

Version: 1 Date: 18 October 2012

Reviewer: Emily Evens

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Very interesting research question; I have not read much on the motivation of health workers in the HIV field. However, while the study results are interesting they are not sufficiently connected to MC provision. More details on the role of HW in MC provision in other settings or in HIV prevention programs within PNG is needed. Also, some discussion of how MC may be provided in PNG and how HWs would contribute to MC programs is needed if the focus of the study is to remain on HW motivation for MC provision. The results need to be placed within the service delivery context more deeply.

- Methods, 2nd paragraph. Clarify which methods were used in which phase.
- Methods, 2nd paragraph. What were the issues or domains discussed during interviews and focus groups? Please discuss briefly.
- Methods, 4th paragraph. How many interviews and FGDs were conducted with each participant group? I see this in the results section but it should be included in methods. A table might be a good way to summarize data collection by type, population and study phase. Also, generally a minimum of 2 FGDs are necessary to examine group norms. What language were interviews conducted in?
- Methods, 5th paragraph. Were any inter-coder reliability statistics calculated? Was each transcript coded by one or more people?

Minor Essential Revisions

- Abstract, Background, 2nd sentence. PNG should be spelled out as Papua New Guinea at first use.
- Abstract, Background, 2nd sentence. Awkward wording—“motivation and actions of health workers mobilization of sexual and reproductive health services”. Workers do not mobilize services they mobilize users or mobilize for services. This is an issue throughout the paper.
- Abstract, Methods, 1st sentence. Mixed methods usually refers to both qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Abstract, Results and Discussion, 1st sentence. Initial use of the term “HW motivation” is unclear—motivation to do what? Provide services? Also needed in the background section.
The evidence for the statement that successful mobilization of services (again—how do you mobilize a service?) required commitment from HWs is missing. While this intuitively is true, the results do not seem to provide evidence supporting this but instead seem to point more toward the potential contribution of HWs and not what is required for successful provision of services.

Can you give a sense of what types of providers are included under HWs? Physicians? Nurses? Extension workers?

Is there any evidence on how the motivation of HWs can contribute positively or negatively to the success of an HIV intervention or programme?

The statement that the epidemic is progressing less rapidly than feared seems out of place.

“…and options” What does this mean? Differing programmatic formats? Clarify.

Are you only talking about HWs willingness to apply themselves? What about their ability to be successful?

Correct grammar: factors have an effect; they do not “impact on”.

Need space between practice and citation.

Missing word: “To have an impact on”.

Need space before citation.

Add word: “…population belonging to a Christian denomination”

Confusing, do you mean most government HWs identify as Christian too? Also, do not capitalize churches.

What is meant by “bonding”?

If the study is all qualitative it is not using mixed methods.

Awkward start of sentence.

Need space before citation.

Acronyms inappropriate here; write out what IMR and AT stand for.

What considerations are being referred to?

Change title of table: Distribution of study facilities by type of setting and Province.

Missing punctuation: “…presented
were:"

- Results, 4th and 5th paragraphs. The mixing of physical risk and social risk is a bit confusing. While the quote in the 5th paragraph pulls them together the text goes back and forth.
- Results, 5th paragraph. The risks of working in Port Moresby are not known to all—can you describe this place?
- Results, 6th paragraph, 1st and 2nd sentences. Confusing and wordy. Also, be careful not to overstate results or themes from one or two mentions in the data. The manuscript does not give any mention of the frequency of themes—this would be helpful.
- Results, 8th paragraph. NSV should not be abbreviated here.
- Results, 12th paragraph, 2nd paragraph. Discuss of individual characteristics should be moved to the next section and not with religious faith.
- Discussion, 1st paragraph. The paper mentions challenges of accessing appropriate equipment but I do not remember any mention of that in the results section.
- Discussion, 1st paragraph. This needs a discussion of how motivation for the provision of SRH services applies to MC. In what ways are these results directly transferrable to MC? In what ways might they be different?
- Discussion, 1st paragraph, last sentence. Saying that this study can be applied to other developing countries could be a bit of an overstatement. Especially given the emphasis placed on socio-cultural context earlier in the paper. Maybe what is meant is that the domains that influence motivation (i.e. religion) could be similar and not the specific findings?
- Discussion, 3rd paragraph. Discuss of social capital is confusing. Who has the social capital? Communities served by HWs?
- Discussion, 5th paragraph. Confusing—what is the main point here?
- Discussion, 6th paragraph. This linking of results to what is needed for future sexual and reproductive health programs is very useful. Add this to the other results sections.
- Discussion. While the framework presented in Figure 1 is usefully conceptually it would be very interesting to add a framework for integrated the study results into improved performance/motivation for HWs. Have you considered the Performance Improvement approach or another similar programmatic approach for improving health worker performance?
- Discussion, 9th and 10th paragraphs. Somewhat repetitive and too short. Need more application of how findings will affect MC provision.
- Limitations, 1st paragraph, 3rd and 4th sentences. Variations in the capabilities of different levels of facilities are not a limitation.
- Conclusion. Study results are interesting but they are not connected to MC provision enough. More details on how MC may be provided in PNG and how HWs would contribute to MC programs is needed if the focus of the study is on
HW motivation for MC provision.

Discretionary Revisions
- Results, 2nd paragraph, 4th sentence. Repetitive, could be deleted.

**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:**
No competing interests