Reviewer's report


Version: 1 Date: 22 July 2008

Reviewer: Dilys Walker

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined? AMTSL is an important issue both for maternal health and neonatal well being. It has been poorly studied and this study adds both interesting data and a useful approach to evaluating AMTSL.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work? Yes the methods are clearly described however some items are missing, such as how observers were trained, and how the curricula were reviewed.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
This is an observational study and is not controlled.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
There is no mention of approval by any investigation or ethics committee and there is no mention of limitations.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
The discussion is mixed within the results section and should be reworked to clearly Differentiate between results and recommendations or conclusions.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Yes

7. Is the writing acceptable? Yes, the writing is acceptable with minor corrections listed below.

Major Compulsory Revisions-
Background
1. First page. Second paragraph, needs a sentence to explain why the decision was made to remove immediate cord clamping.

2. Third paragraph. First sentence needs reference.

3. Fourth paragraph, last sentence, states study found use of AMTSL was “quite low”- need to state just what this means…

4. Fifth paragraph--Need to state where study was conducted in the sentence that describes the aim. This is not stated until the second paragraph of the methods section.

Methods section

5. Fourth paragraph. Were the observers trained in observational technique and if so, how?

6. First paragraph page 4. States “the value was adjusted downward because health practitioners not managing deliveries directly were included in the sample” I do not understand who these practitioners might be, and why such practitioners were included if they do not manage deliveries?

7. Under “health care providers” page 4. States the team interviewed 106 providers- I would like to know how many were physicians, nurse midwives, etc. Especially as the overwhelming majority of the observations were of nurse, midwife, and “other” provider deliveries.

8. There is no mention of IRB or ethics or research committee approval for this work

Results

9. The entire section that discusses “National standard treatment guidelines” should be integrated into the background. These are not results of the study.

10. The last paragraph of page 4, first sentence describes the content of pre-service curricula for physicians and nurse midwives. This needs a Reference.

11. Page 5 section “storage conditions”. It would be useful to have an overall assessment, such as “X% of facilities had appropriate storage conditions for oxytocin and “X%” for ergometrine”.

12. Page 6 section “Use of AMTSL”. Paragraph 3. States that physicians were not observed. Why are they listed in the table then? Who are the “other” providers if they are not physicians, nurses or midwives?

13. Page 9. Various paragraphs would be better in conclusions. This needs to be reworked so that results and conclusions, or recommendations, are more clearly separated. For example, the third paragraph states recommendations. This is not a result and should be moved to discussion or conclusions.

14. The 5th paragraph that outlines suggestions about harmful practices and
trainings. Again, these are not results.

15. There is no mention of limitations of the study.

16. Table 2. This is confusing because the guidelines for AMTSL recommend use of uterotonic drugs after the delivery. This table is confusing because it combines pre and postpartum use.

Minor changes:
1. First page: First paragraph, second line is missing an “a” between “with case” third line. “Twenty five percentage” should read “twenty five percent”

2. Next sentence should read “Recent information indicates that worldwide the percentage is even higher than previously thought, ranging from 30-39%”

Methods Section
3. First paragraph. Second line- “barrier” should read “barriers”

Results
4. Paragraph 2, line 6. Remove “the” between “regarding” and “all”

5. The second paragraph of this section, second sentence should be changed from “Oxytocin unlike ergometrine is only limited to hospital and upon…..” to “Oxytocin, unlike ergometrine, is limited to hospital use and only when prescribed by a physician”

6. Page 5 section “Availability of uterotonic drugs”. States misporostol is often available at research institutions. Were any of these in the sample? Please define MSD

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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