Title: Verbal Autopsy completion rate and factors associated with undetermined cause of death in rural poor resource setting of Tanzania

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Reviewer: Elisabeth França

Reviewer’s report:

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The revised manuscript still presents results of the analysis of factors associated with undetermined causes in the Abstract and Results sections without considering that the logistic regression was performed considering separate models for neonates/children and for adults. For example, the statement “Type of the relationship of the respondent to the deceased, place where death happened, and the level of education level of education of the respondent to deceased were associated with undetermined cause of death” is related to the model for adults or for neonates and children, or does it occur in both models? (page 2, 2nd paragraph). The last phrase in this paragraph also needs to be clarified because we don’t know which model the statement is about. In the model for adults, age at death seems to be a significant explanatory variable (OR= 0.99, IC 95%: 0.99-0.99; p=0.03) in the multivariate analysis and the results should be discussed in the text. In reference to this variable, please clarify how it was included in the list of factors associated with undetermined cause of death (Methods, page 5, first phrase) categorized as “Neonates, children and Adult” if you had two separate models, as mentioned above.

The presentation of the descriptive analysis of the completion rates of VA has improved a lot and is one of the most interesting themes in the manuscript, but still leaves some questions and doubts. Considering that the objective of VA is to obtain estimates on the specific causes of death, an interesting result shown in Figure 2 is that losses in 2002-2007 were similar before the physicians had access to VA to assign the cause of death (n=1178, 23%) and after the VA forms were submitted to physicians and ended with a specific cause of death (n=1174, 23%). Hence, the emphasis on the recommendation of the introduction of alternative methods to physician review of VA should be put into context given the importance of these previous steps. Another point is that the proportion of cause specific coded as undetermined varied significantly across years as stated on page 5 (4th paragraph) but improved a lot in 2007, and this should also be considered in the discussion. An interesting finding mentioned by the authors on the third paragraph of the discussion was the lower proportion of undetermined causes of death among neonates. To adequately inform the readers, the proportions by age of death should be provided in table 1 or in the text.
Finally, the paper still needs a lot of work to be done in the writing process before publication. The results section contains some numbers and percentages which did not match the correspondent tables and figures and should be corrected. Also the last phrase on page 5 ("In addition,...") does not make sense.

Concerning the tables, in Table 1 I think the number 31 (variable “Age at death”) should be deleted (n=5058 in the table if including this number, different from n=5027 in figures 1 and 2). Also in this table, there is a discrepancy in the number presented for the variable “Relation of the respondent with the deceased” for adult deaths (n=2394 in the table, and n=2819 in the same table, first variable, last category). The same problem occurred with the total number presented for the variable “Relation of the respondent with the diseased” for neonates and children deaths (n=1794) and n=2208 in the same table, first variable, first two categories. If these discrepancies are due to missing values, they should be clarified in a footnote. Concerning the quality of written English, there are some fundamental language errors and repetition which should be corrected.

**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.