Reviewer’s report

Title: Social autopsy: INDEPTH Network experiences of utility, process, practices and challenges in investigating causes and contributors to mortality

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Reviewer: Maria de Fatima Marinho de Souza

Reviewer’s report:

I read with satisfaction the improvement of the text. What the authors present is a completely modified text after revision and that was very pleasing to read.

There is just one problem in the conclusion: I agree that the delay at home was a main problem for child death in Ghana since it was the first factor to take place. Because this study only accounted for already deceased children, we do not know if a child with the same symptoms and who did not incur a delay at home would have survived if the child would have had access to health care. Because we do not have this information, caution is necessary when affirming that the issue of the delay at home was due to the lack of competence of the caretaker to identify the severity of the symptoms or cultural issues that led to a delay in looking for health care. Based on our experience from Latin America, we know that the caretaker and the community are aware that health care can be accessed, and if it is worth seeking care or not. There is no doubt that the cultural issue is important in this situation but the behavior could be modified by experience.

It is also important to point out that access to health care is extremely difficult for communities in isolated areas, often being too expensive to use any sort of transportation. In this sense, the community knows whether it is worth to seek health care or not.

Based on Uganda’s experience, we believe that searching for health care or not, does not make a difference on the outcome. Why people in Uganda would look for care if the quality of assistance is not good? Could it be because health care was better in the past? Could the cultural differences between two ethnic groups explain these differences?

Congratulations for the excellent paper it will be useful for all.

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.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.