Reviewer's report

Title: Drivers and Deterrents of Facility Delivery in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Systematic Review

Version: 1 Date: 3 May 2013

Reviewer: Phyllis Dako-Gyeke

Reviewer's report:

Paper is well written and presents a comprehensive analysis of the predictors of FBD in Africa. It is important to focus on a key indicator of MDG 5 (FBD) just before 2015, when most countries are working hard to achieve the MDGs.

Discretionary Revisions

However, the following concerns must be addressed/responded to:

1. One would expect the word “Factors” to have been included in the key search terms. Unfortunately, it is not part of the search terms. This might have led to exclusion of some studies that focused on factors that influenced FBD. Although it is mentioned in passing under “Study selection and data extraction” it is not included in the search terms. If it is an oversight, author must include it or state specifically why use of this word (“factors”) was avoided.

2. It is of concern that qualitative studies were totally excluded from this systematic review:
   a. First, the second aim of this paper is to document research designs and data collection methodology used to explore factors associated with FBD. In this case exclusion of qualitative studies does not allow the study to make conclusive comments on diverse methodological approaches used.
   b. Second, the results clearly indicates that exclusion of qualitative studies led to total disregard of cultural influences that mediate and shape FBD in Africa. This is because cultural factors are adequately studied through use of qualitative approaches. It is recommended that author comments on some of the cultural influences on FBD under the Discussion by referring to few qualitative studies such as Bazzano et. al (2008) that used ethnographic data.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Usually, systematic reviews have limitations that the author must acknowledge. Author must include a paragraph that highlights limitations such as use of articles published in English and only within a limited time period. The author must acknowledge that excluding articles that do not satisfy these criteria might have influenced type of articles pulled, and findings.

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