Reviewer's report

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

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 12 May 2013

**Reviewer:** Claudia Hanson

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Title: Drivers and Deterrent of Facility delivery in sub-Saharan Africa

Version April 2013

The paper is a systematic review on predictors of facility delivery, limited to publication 1995-2011. The topic presents an important issue. The strength of the study is the conduct of the systematic review restricted to sub-Saharan Africa which is clearly missing and could have important programmatic guidance. However, the review was only done by only one single person, no assessment of the quality of studies is presented, and also no meta analysis was done why the results and conclusion this studies give are limited. Therefore the study misses to give much more in-depth knowledge and expands only in a limited manner what is already known from other published reviews.

I recommend

Compulsory revision

1) Assessment of the quality of care of the studies, and if possible a meta analysis for selected high quality studies (e.g. the 43 using multivariate analysis ?) for common predictors such as age, education, parity...)

Overall layout of the paper

The manuscript follows the common structure.

Introduction:

The introduction should develop more clearly what this review wants to add compared to previously published reviews

Method:

A summary of the search strategy should be presented in the main body of the paper.

The omission of articles published in French is a limitation

A paragraph on assessment of the quality of the articles need to be included as well as a flow chart depicting the exclusion of articles step by step

Criteria for inclusion are mentioned in a vague manner. In result the statement in the results section “upon closer inspection, another 97 were removed” is difficult to follow.

Use of check-list as recommended when presenting a systematic review might
No information is given on number of participants, setting, ...

Results:
The description “regional health and demographic surveillance data” is unclear and the source needs to be better explained and referenced

Table 1 needs to be referenced. Also in the text references are missing to identify the respective studies.

Table 2: More detailed information is needed, eg. Adjustment for parity typically increases the effect of maternal age on uptake. Mixing results from univariate and multivariate analysis misses important findings

Direction of influence should not be left blank

The categorisation of individual, social, ANC and facility factors would need to be introduced in the introduction and method section (conceptual framework).

Table 5: it is unclear what table 5 presents.

Discussion
The discussion fails to summarise the main findings of the study in a concise manner, but is mainly concerned with the limitations of the studies presented. Although the discussion is interesting and well written, it helps little to reflect the findings of the review as such.

The issue of who factors might be categorised is taken up in the discussion, but as mentioned before, should be presented earlier in the method section to describe the rational.

Conclusion
The conclusion that e.g education and parity is most strongly and consistently associated with facility delivery cannot be concluded from this review as the meta analysis or at least a description of finding of each study is missing. This is what the reader would like to know, and where the systematic review would add to knowledge very much needed.

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