Reviewer's report

Title: Effect of gender preference on fertility: cross-sectional study among women of Tharu community from rural area of Eastern region of Nepal

Version: 1 Date: 11 October 2013

Reviewer: Laila El-Zeini

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. The data used is based on a sample from an indigenous group that constitutes, according to the authors, less than 7 per cent of the total population of Nepal. The findings, hence, cannot be generalized to the whole country as the title of the submitted manuscript clearly indicates. However, for such localized study to be of larger benefits, there is a need to say something about the context and how this special community differ (or not) from the rest of the country. Note that there is already a large literature on the effect of sex preference on fertility; without such contextualization, the submitted manuscript will be of little value.
2. The sex ratio at birth is typically higher than 1, and hence the excess in the sex ratio is not totally attributable to son preference. This needs to be acknowledged.
3. There is a need for more information about the regressions, whose results are given in Tables 3 and 4. In particular; what is the difference between adjusted and unadjusted odds ratios, and how well the fit of the model is (e.g. proportion of correct classification). If unadjusted odds ratios refer to bivariate relationship and not from the regression, they should not be presented in the table or discussed in the text.
4. In the regression analysis whose results presented in Table 4, it is not clear why age, educational status, and number of children are not controlled for. These variables should be included as done with the regression analysis presented in Table 3.

Minor Essential Revisions
5. In the first paragraph under the background section, it is said that ‘Sex selective abortion reduces the sex ratio at birth’. Since most sex selective abortion is done in the context of son preference, the sex ratio at birth (defined as the number of male live births divided by the number of female live births) will be inflated not reduced.
6. The measures SPR (son preference ratio) and BR (desire for balance ratio) are not clear enough. It is, in particular, not clear how these measures are computed in case of having more than two children.
7. The results of the bivariate analysis are not useful because of the strong interdependence between the explanatory variables.
8. The title of Table 2 is not consistent with its contents.
9. The regression whose results presented in Table 4 is a binary logistic not multinomial as indicated.
10. The manuscript needs copy editing to correct several grammatical and style mistakes.

Discretionary Revisions

11. In the first paragraph under the Methods section, the authors say that a semi structured questionnaire was used to collect the data used in their study. This means that richer qualitative data have been collected. It is advised, if possible, to highlight in the discussion section some results based on such qualitative data to help understand the results of the quantitative data analysis.

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: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests