Reviewer's report

Title: The involvement of men in maternal health care: participatory case studies from Maligita and Kibibi, Uganda

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Reviewer: Dan Kaye

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Title: The involvement of men in maternal health care: participatory case studies from Maligita and Kibibi, Uganda

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Major compulsory revisions

Abstract

1. In the background, the authors should link men's involvement in reproductive health to maternal mortality by delineating men's potential role in addressing or mitigating maternal mortality. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined? The authors need to clarify the research question asked.

2. From the methods, it is not clear who the participants were. There is a statement that: 'The purpose of this study undertaken in two rural villages in southeastern Uganda, was to understand men's participation in pregnancy and child birth as well as women's attitudes toward male involvement.' This gives the impression that participants were both men and women. The next sentence: 'Focus group discussions and semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect information from 35 individuals who were pregnant or had been involved in a birth experience in the past 3 years' suggests that participants were female, as it is unlikely that the 35 could have been pregnant or involved in a birth experience if they were men. This needs to be clarified or the sentence rewritten. To whom were the questionnaires administered?

3. The results are NOT clear and should be revised. What does the sentence: 'Most of the men of these two villages believed pregnancy and childbirth to be the area of women' mean?

4. The conclusion is also unclear. The statement that 'This exploratory study has highlighted the space for increased male involvement and participation in maternal health and the need for community health education directed at men that engages them in this important area' needs to be revised to point out exactly what the study found.

Main manuscript

5. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work? No

A lot of details were left out in the Methods section
a. The authors should add detail on why the setting was chosen.
b. What motivated the choice of the setting? How were the participants selected?
c. What informed the selection of participants for either the questionnaires or the focus groups?
d. What issues were explored? How was the data analysed?
e. Was there a theoretical framework that informed the study?

6. Results: Are the data sound and well controlled? No

a. In the results, the reason for responses to the question: Is it common for men and women (the husband and wife) to decide where child birth should take place? - should have been presented, as they would enable authors to gain a deeper understanding of the motivation for male involvement.
b. The authors should not merely list quotations without explaining or interpreting them. The data presented is not sound and does not indicate any synthesis or explanation of the data.
c. The manuscript does not adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition for qualitative research.

7. Discussion

a. How do the findings compare with other researchers on the subject? This does not seem apparent. The discussion and conclusions are not well balanced and are not supported by the data.
b. Are there any limitations the authors may wish to acknowledge?

Minor essential revisions

The authors should ensure that all tables are well labelled with a table number and title.

Discretionary revisions

There are several typographical errors, which the authors need to address.

**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:**

No I have no competing interests