Reviewer's report

Title: Adolescent - Parent Communication on Sexual and Reproductive Health Issues among High School Students in Dire Dawa, Eastern Ethiopia: A Cross Sectional Study

Version: 1 Date: 27 May 2014

Reviewer: Selby M Conrad

Reviewer's report:

This article focuses on an area of great import. Understanding the sexual health knowledge, sexual risk behaviors and parent child sexual communication of High School students in Eastern Ethiopia is a topic that is understudied and of interest. This makes this article of great value. However, there are several areas in which the authors may wish to make changes that would clarify and strengthen this article. Please see areas below. Thank you for the opportunity to review this article. I hope the authors find my comments helpful.

Major Compulsory Revisions

General comments: The article would benefit from continued editing. There are many sentences and phrases throughout that are in the improper tense, awkwardly worded or confusing to the reader.

Introduction:
• Authors may wish to expand some of the literature view:
  o Many readers may be unaware of what the national reproductive health strategy is.
  o The study’s hypotheses should be clearly outlined at the end of the introduction. The way it is currently written, it is difficult for the reader to know exactly what the study is exploring.
  o There is a fair amount of literature on parent child sexual communication that has not be included in this introduction. While some of it pertains to subsamples of adolescents (e.g., mental health samples), it may be worth referring to this literature.

Methods:
• The paragraph on sampling methods was confusing to this reader. Reworking the description of this methodology may help others to follow how the sample was selected.
• There is no mention of the questionnaires or instruments used in this study.
  o What was used to measure HIV/STI knowledge? Sexual risk behaviours?
Parent child communication? Are these measures reliable and valid (with adults? adolescents?)? What is the range?

- Subheadings related to measurement may be helpful
  - There is little discussion of the methods for the qualitative part of this study.
  - How were interviews structured? Who trained the interviewer? Were the transcripts double coded for themes? If so, what is the inter-rater reliability? What was included in the development of thematic codes for the qualitative data?

Results:

- The paragraphs that provide the descriptive information related to knowledge and sexual risk behaviors are very dense with text. Perhaps a table would help readers to easily access this important information?
- The qualitative data provides rich information about the topics. However, I am not clear where the percentages are coming from. Is this a result of the analysis of the interviews or quantitative data?

Minor Essential Revisions

Literature review/Introduction:

- It is currently not clear if the discussion about parent-adolescent communication is related to youth from Ethiopia or a general discussion. Additionally, citations related to communication about sexuality being “controversial” and that “most parents do not feel comfortable or competent in talking with their…” will strengthen this section.

Discretionary Revisions

Literature review/Introduction:

- Authors may wish to add subheadings to help the reader follow the outline of the literature review.
- Adding information specific to Ethiopian culture and sexuality would be very interesting to the reader.

Results:

- A header noting the transition to qualitative section would help the reader follow the article.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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