Reviewer's report

Title: Influence of family members on utilization of maternal health care services among teen and adult pregnant women in Kathmandu, Nepal: a cross sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 12 September 2014

Reviewer: Angela M Bayer

Reviewer's report:

Congratulations to the authors. This is a very interesting and important topic, about the influence of women, husbands and mothers-in-law on use of maternal health care services in Nepal. Additionally, the study was very well and thoughtfully implemented, the information and analysis presented in the paper is appropriate and high-quality, and the results are interesting. Here, I provide comments to improve the manuscript prior to its publication. All are minor essential revisions.

Background

1. Page 4, Lines 15-17. What are the MDG targets for Nepal? I think that it is important to mention and cite these, so that the readers have a point of comparison when you present the data.
2. Page 4, Lines 17-19. What does the 50% refer to, at least 4 ANC visits, delivery by a skilled attendant or both? Please clarify. Also, please remove the second 70% in line 19.
3. Page 5, Lines 1-7. I would recommend separating out the Nepal study. For the four studies with only one, were these quantitative? Perhaps mention.
4. Page 5, Line 7. You mention that the techniques were “not explicit.” What does this mean? Please clarify.
5. Page 5, Lines 7-9. I would recommend removing or clarifying this. I think that you’ve already mentioned the limitations of past studies and that this is confusing. For example, from what you mentioned before, the limitations of past quantitative studies (with sufficient sample sizes?) is that they only include women while the limitations of past qualitative studies is that they do include the three populations, but have smaller samples. Again, please clarify.
6. Page 5, Lines 13-14. I would recommend moving “Additionally... associated with age” up to and of the previous paragraph, as one of the overall limitations of past studies. Here, it gets lost.

Methods

7. Page 6, Lines 9-16. This paragraph is very confusing. I would recommend streamlining the information.
8. Page 7, Lines 12-17. How was joint decision making measured? For example, you mention that the participants ranked the individuals involved in the decision making process according to their influence. However, what about two people who participated equally? How were these considered? Please explain. If individuals were “forced” to rank one above the other, please include in the limitations section.

9. Page 7, Lines 17-22. The characteristics considered for the husband and mother-in-law are not mentioned here. Please include.

Results

10. Page 9, Lines 18-20. This result is confusing, but the confusion may be mine. The authors state that “the woman and her husband were quite similar to be influential persons…” However, the authors (from what I have understood) “forced” participants to rank people in order, without allowing shared decision making or “equal rank.” This is similar to comment 8 above. Again, please clarify. Perhaps this needs to be rephrased?

11. Page 10, Lines 9-11. I think that the text here is incorrect. From what I understand, Table 3 refers to the factors associated with the woman being the most influential person, not the woman or others as stated here. Please clarify and correct.

12. Page 10, Lines 13-15. After each age group, please specify that these refers to the female participants, to ensure that the information is explicit. For example, “young adult females and adult females, compared to teen females.”

13. Page 10, Lines 8-16. I think that it would be helpful to include the key aspects of the other findings in Table 3 in the text, for ethnicity and referral status.

Tables 1-2

14. Please use the same number of decimal places in the percentages.

Table 3

15. In the age groups, please include the ages in the column headers.
16. For ethnicity and referral status, it is unclear which group is the reference group.

General

17. The English needs to be reviewed. Once it is reviewed, I think that the messages in the paper will be much clearer.

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.