Reviewer's report

Title: Adolescent first births in East Africa: disaggregating characteristics, trends and determinants

Version: 2 Date: 25 July 2014

Reviewer: Korrie de Koning

Reviewer's report:

The research reviews the characteristics of socio-economic, demographic and geographic characteristics and determinants for adolescent first births in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The analysis shows the need for further aggregation of data and better use of DHS data to conduct research into the context and experiences of adolescents with an early pregnancy, to inform policy and practice, especially among the groups identified as most vulnerable. An important issue emerging from this data analysis is that pregnancy seems to be driving early marriage in these three countries rather than marriage leading to early pregnancy (page 9). This has important policy implications not only for the countries but also for the international agenda setting. This point is well addressed in the discussion but could also feature in the conclusion and findings in the abstract and implications can be drawn for the global agenda setting.

This is a timely review that draws attention to the need to continue the prevention of teenage pregnancy beyond 2015.

I am not a demographer and as such am not able to judge the validity of all the methodologies used. To improve clarity I suggest that the write up of the multivariate analysis of factors associated with adolescent first births is made more concise concentrating on the most important results.

I recommend that a demographer reviews the statistics in particular table 10-12 which show very high confidence intervals.

I appreciate the reference in the discussion for further research. However, I think that the discussion lacks a two important issues that could have been raised. I miss in the discussion the issue of coercion into sex among especially the poorest and the very young and the issue of the vulnerability of children in broken families and orphans.

Major compulsory revisions:
none

Minor essential revisions
1. Correct the mistake on page 7 that states that girls with a live birth below 16 are less likely to be unmarried. This should be married.
2. Concentrate the findings of the multivariate analysis on the most important
ones.
Raise in the discussion issues about coercive sex and the vulnerability of young girls from broken families as potential reasons for pregnancy.

Discretionary revisions
Strengthen the arguments and implications for global agenda setting beyond 2015.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests