Reviewer's report

Title: Delays in seeking an abortion until the second trimester: a qualitative study in South Africa

Version: 1 Date: 8 June 2007

Reviewer: Justus Hofmeyr

Reviewer's report:

General
Delays in seeking abortion till the second trimester: A qualitative study in South Africa

This is an interesting study seeking to address an important problem faced by providers of pregnancy termination services in South Africa (and presumably elsewhere)

1. Is the question new and well defined?

This is not a new question, but the data presented add new information to our knowledge

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

The methods are appropriate and well described. I am not an expert on qualitative methodology, but would have like to have seen a more specific detail as how the themes were extracted.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?

The data are sound. This was a descriptive study so there is no control group (it would have been interesting to compare the findings with that from a group who access abortion services early)

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

I am not sure of the conventions for qualitative data, but the reporting appeared adequate.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and supported by the data?

Yes

6. Do the title and abstract adequately convey what has been found?

Yes

7. Is the writing acceptable.

The prose is of a high standard.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

It would be useful to have more concrete suggestions to the health authority as to how to address the issues (eg, given the difficulty of providing client-friendly services in the public sector where inevitably a large
number of staff are opposed to abortion, might it be better to contract more of the abortion services to NGO's?

It may be useful to refer to our paper in which we found that many women terminated pregnancy not because they did not want the baby, but because of overwhelming financial adversity (which was alluded to in the current paper). It would be interesting to know whether women in the study had an ultrasound scan, and how they felt about it (this data may not have been collected).


**What next?:** Accept after discretionary revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.