Reviewer’s report

Title: Ambivalence towards a prospective pregnancy among contraceptive users

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Reviewer: Carl Kendall

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript explores ambivalence concerning fertility and contraceptive use in a population of relatively young contraceptive users in Honduras. The study uses a prospective panel design and collects information at initiation and at one year. The study is well written, clearly describes methods in sufficient detail, and the discussion is clearly linked to the data. The study adds an open-ended question in the second round to explore ambivalence. A methodological success of the paper was capturing a substantial proportion of women at follow-up. More detail about how this followup was accomplished would be an important contribution (Discretionary revision). Descriptive univariate and bivariate analysis is used. Women are compared over the two waves for contraceptive methods and expression of ambivalence. The authors demonstrate the magnitude of contraceptive switching (reasons for which are not explored in the paper) and the varied needs of contraceptive users as well as ambivalence. An analysis of the predictive value of expressions of ambivalence and contraceptive and fertility outcomes would enhance the significance of the paper. Findings reinforce the notion that young women have complex needs for counseling and recommendations about contraception, although there is little specification. The study hints at the notion, not discussed, that contracepting women might need counseling to stop contracepting and seek a pregnancy. I think, however, that if this interpretation is feasible, it is an artifact of the limited data collected, rather than a comprehensive portrait of women’s intentions.

The paper is a solid contribution to the literature on fertility decision-making. The authors admit the limitation of not having asked the open-ended question at baseline. Equally, asking about women’s intentions for the coming year and comparing to actual behavior would have provided interesting information. Analysis could be enhanced by exploring decision-making in terms of relationship status and pregnancy outcomes (although sample size was probably a limitation here). Under these constraints, complementary qualitative research would have enriched the findings and recommendations greatly.

Minor Essential Revision:

One quibble is that authors consider the women to be “fatalistic.” Fatalism is a term long rejected in the social sciences. It is unscientific and associated with 19th and 20th century theories of poverty and underdevelopment that attribute these conditions to an underlying psychological predisposition labeled fatalistic. The authors do not explore this explanatory framework in their study and it is out of place in this empirical study, even in the discussion.
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have written papers with the first author on similar topics. This may create the impression of a conflict of interest. Other than that I have no financial conflict of interest.