Reviewer’s report

Title: Why is unmet need of contraception so high while family planning is low in Butajira District, South Central Ethiopia?

Version: 1 Date: 18 November 2011

Reviewer: Kapil Yadav

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revision:
1. The Background section of the article can be written in the following sequence: Ethiopia’s contraceptive prevalence rate and unmet needs, how has it changed over the course of years, factors influencing them, governments initiatives to address them.

2. Details of the study area are lacking. Methodology has to be written at least briefly even if it has been published elsewhere.

3. It is not clear whether consent was taken from the study participants.

4. The last paragraph in Methodology section says that statistically significant covariates were included for multivariate analysis to control for confounding. It has not been mentioned at what level of p value was result considered significant and what covariates were considered as confounders.

5. As per the results of the study only 5746 women were interviewed. It’s not clear whether all women were interviewed. The article “Determinants of fertility in rural Ethiopia: the case of Butajira Demographic Surveillance System” referred to in the methodology section says that 9996 women were interviewed.

6. Age, an important variable, has not been presented in table 1. Total number of participants, N, needs to be mentioned in the table headings.

7. The authors recommend that government should strive to increase the education level beyond primary, thereby indirectly placing the onus on the women to seek for contraception when, as mentioned in the article, stock out of contraceptives, absence of preferred methods etc are some of the barriers to use family planning methods. Recommendation should have been to strengthen the health systems to deliver the services desired by the clients.

8. The increase in the contraception has been ascribed to the village based health worker programme of the government. But the authors do not have data to support. The increase could have had happened even in the absence of any programme. Moreover, authors themselves have said in the background section that village level health workers are overburdened and might not be able to perform at the desired level.

Discretionary revisions:
1. The last paragraph of the Background section needs to be cut short and can
be written as follows: the study was conducted in a district with high population pressure where polygamy is rampant, especially among Muslims who constitute two thirds of all the residents of the district.

2. Third paragraph of the background section mentions that age wise disaggregated data shows different levels of unmet needs. It would have been interesting to know whether the same is true for the present study.

3. The results of background characteristics should have mentioned about univariate analysis first followed by multivariate analysis.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.