Reviewer's report

Title: Implementation of legal abortion in Nepal: A model for rapid scale-up of high-quality care

Version: 1 Date: 13 February 2012

Reviewer: Jillian Henderson

Reviewer's report:

This is an excellent, well-written manuscript describing the remarkable program that has been created in Nepal. I have no mandatory revisions, and the authors have paid great attention to detail, so I have no minor edits either. A rare occurrence!

Discretionary revisions:

Middle of page 7: Consider also mentioning the severe disruptions to movement due to bandhs, and also beyond the Maoist insurgency, the transition from a monarchy caused disruption to civil society.

A little more detail on the importance of second trimester abortion provision would be beneficial to include given that many of the worst complications from unsafe abortion are for those procedures conducted in later stages of pregnancy. Also, some discussion about the reason training in second trimester provision was delayed and whether things might have been done differently would be instructive.

The constraints of the law could also be discussed; women seeking a safe legal abortion for reasons other than rape, health or anomalies beyond 12 weeks are not eligible for care in the legal system. They may nonetheless seek abortion and contribute to continued morbidity and/or mortality from unsafe abortion. Do you think there is any need to work toward additional legal reform in Nepal?

Do you think Nepal may have to contend with challenges that India has faced in the implementation of legal abortion with regard to sex-selective abortion. Perhaps discuss any efforts the TCIC program made efforts to monitor or address this issue. Or, consider mentioning some of the challenges providers may face implementing the law while also doing their best to protect patient health. [Lamichhane P, Harken T, Puri M, Darney PD, Blum M, Harper CC, Henderson JT. Sex-selective abortion in Nepal: a qualitative study of health workers’ perspectives. Women’s Health Issues. 2011 May-Jun;21(3 Suppl):S37-41.]

I also think you could highlight even further the importance of reproductive health research to identify program weaknesses and interventions to improve the provision of abortion and its integration with contraceptive care and other reproductive health services in Nepal. Such a huge investment has been made in
the program, and setting a standard for program work that is reflexive and incorporates perspectives from rigorous research is a great demonstration of the power of the collaborative effort.

**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 declare that I have no competing interests.