Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of active trachoma and associated risk factors among children of the pastoralist population in Madda Walabu rural district, Southeast Ethiopia: A community-based cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 13 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Anthony Solomon

Reviewer's report:

There's no doubt that the manuscript is improved. Thanks for the opportunity to look at it again.

Line 30: it would be unusual for none of the cases of TI to also have TF. Perhaps within the number of children with TI the authors are reporting cases of TF+TI as well as TI alone. The signs, however, should be graded independently (in the sense that either, both or neither can be present in any eye). Suggest report: 1. number of children with TF alone in one or both eyes, 2. number of children with TI alone in one or both eyes, 3. number of children with both TF+TI.

Line 49-50: although strong associations were found with some WASH-related variables, it is not possible to conclude on the basis of these cross-sectional data that it is the WASH characteristics that F and E are the key interventions in this population. The observed associations may well be confounded (by poverty, for example). Suggest just conclude that intervention with the A, F and E components of SAFE is recommended. (There are no data in the paper on trichiasis, so recommending S is difficult; it might, however, be worth saying that screening adults in the community for trichiasis would be a good idea.)

Line 71: "It was reported that over 9 million 1-9-year-old children live with active trachoma". I think that this is irrelevant, because the A, F and E components of SAFE have to be delivered to whole populations, not just the children with active trachoma. Suggest delete this sentence. The risk of reporting numbers like this is that funders think that the job that needs to be done is much smaller than it actually is.

Line 137: since this study relies on the accuracy of grading, suggest cite the GTMP methodology paper (doi: 10.3109/09286586.2015.1037401) which gives details of the GTMP training system.
Line 274-275: the statement "In addition, intensifying facial cleanliness and environmental improvement for the elimination of trachoma in such community are more effective." might be interpreted as suggesting that the F and E components of SAFE are more effective than A, for example. That would be an incorrect conclusion: there is robust evidence for the effectiveness of A, as noted in the Cochrane review on the use of antibiotics for trachoma; the evidence for F and E is much, much weaker.

References 4 and 6 and different updates of the same document - which is a secondary reference. Suggest use the primary references instead.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
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Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited
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