Reviewer's report

Title: Unsafe abortion in rural Tanzania - the role of traditional providers and effectiveness of plant species used as abortion remedies

Version: 2 Date: 13 September 2014

Reviewer: Projestine Muganyizi

Reviewer's report:

This study uses a triangulation of Methods in order to describe the various herbs used to induce abortion in a rural setting in Tanzania. The Authors did a very good work to prepare a list of the remedies and their pharmacological properties. However, there are few things that they need to address in order to improve their article.

1.0 Major Compulsory Revisions:
1.1 In the Methodology especially the qualitative part needs more details. In qualitative research it is very important to give details in order to facilitate assessment of study validity.
   • They should justify why was it necessary to use triangulation of methods
   • Who did the interviews and what is his/her experience
   • Indepth interviews (L10-16) How were the 21 traditional provider identified. What experience did they have? Why 2 nurses and 21 providers-not more or less? What additional information was expected from the two FGDs? What is the justification of the small number of participants in each FGD and why two FGD sessions?
   • Who conducted the interviews? What experience?
   • Analysis procedure for the interviews needs expansion to indicate how the themes/categories were obtained
   • It is not enough to say that triangulation of methods was used without real showing that it was important.
1.2 In the Results section:
   • Should state total number of incomplete abortions, total who had unsafe abortion.
   • The quote L14-21 is a story! Who gave this story? Is Winifred a real name? Please give this information in her own words”. It would be more meaningful to give information in interviewee’s (traditional provider/patient) own words?
   • There is little from the patients’ experiences. If possible some few more quotes
from their own words should be added.

1.3 Discussion

• Limitations of the study are not discussed. Please include a paragraph that discusses the limitations.

• The discussion seems to link the strong contraction in vivo effect of the remedies with their potential effectiveness when used for abortion. The discrepancies seen for example “EYABYA” which despite its popularity (L32-34), it did not seem to have any effect on contraction (Table 2). This could mean that there are other mechanisms through which some drugs caused abortions. There was no much attention in discussing why some remedies continue to be used while they have no contraction effect. Possibly more studies on pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of the drugs are needed since some of them probably must be acted upon by body metabolic processes before their action can be demonstrated.

2.0 Minor Essential Revisions

2.1 Abstract: Important missing information

1. Place of study not mentioned

2. It is not clear which method was used to diagnose unsafe abortion.

3. How many women were admitted with incomplete abortion? Where were they admitted and over what duration?

2.2 Introduction

In the last sentence of first paragraph a period should come after the word “countries” (L12). Delete the words “with restrictive abortion laws” in this line because some of these countries have liberal abortion laws.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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