Reviewer’s report

Title: Maternal Associated Factors of Low Birth weight: A Hospital Based Cross-sectional mixed Study in Tigray, Northern Ethiopia

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Reviewer: Abdulai Abubakari

Reviewer’s report:

I found the article very interesting especially the qualitative components. There is no doubt that the study presents the results of primary scientific research. The study is original and to the best of my knowledge I have not seen a similar study with qualitative component.

The data collection tools were appropriate. The statistical analysis was also fairly good. The conclusion appeared to be logic and appropriate and supported by the data. However, the following issues must be rigorously addressed before the paper could be accepted for publication.

Major compulsory revision.

1. The main research question/aim of the study was not clearly stated:

‘This study was aimed to fill the knowledge gap of the region concerning the socio-cultural aspects particularly the tradition of feeding of pregnant mothers’ central zone of Tigray, northern Ethiopia’.

This is very ambiguous and so authors must make sure that it is clearly stated.

2. Authors also mentioned that they measure weight and height of mothers but have not explained how these measurement and standardization were done in the methodology. Or there were taken from antenatal records as secondary data? This must be clarified.

3. It is also not clear how weight gain was calculated. No explanation in respect of this is given in the methodology. There is no explanation in the methodology about the reference that was used in the determination of mother’s weight gain given the mother’s BMI. This must be clarified.

4. It is not also clear to me what the authors mean by ‘interviewer administered piloted questionnaire’ in the methodology section of the abstract (second line).

5. With respect to language the paper was poorly written and must be rigorously proofed read. My conclusion is based on the following observations:

a. There are a lot of clumsy sentences that when not corrected will make it difficult for readers to understand the message in the paper. For example: The
last sentence of the methodology aspect of the abstract- ‘Bivariate and multivariate logistic regression was employed to identify the predictors at p<0.05 following iterative hearing of the discussions, verbatim interpretation done & categorized in to themes for the qualitative study’. This is ambiguous and must be corrected.

The 3rd and 4th paragraphs of the background section are very ambiguous and therefore must be revised.

The first sentence of the subheading obstetric health characteristics of the study participant of the result section is also ambiguous- ‘One hundred seventy nine (58.1%) of the mothers had history of contraceptives use and the type of pregnancy that the mothers had was wanted and planed that accounts for 274(89%), the unwanted and unplanned category of pregnancy type consists of 16(5.2%)’. This must be rephrased.

The first sentence under the subheading culturally prohibited foods and reasons of prohibition during pregnancy of the result section is not also clear- ‘Majority of respondents described the presence culturally prohibited food items and their practices have the tendency to affecting feeding patterns during pregnancy negatively and considered as refusals if they are not carried out as prescribed by their ancestors’. This must be rephrased.

Also the 3rd sentence of the first paragraph of the discussion section is clumsy- ‘Prevalence of low birth weight was found to be 14.6%, which is similar with the LBW levels of sub-Saharan Africa countries1, relatively higher than DHS 2011 report which is 11%13 and it is less than the prevalence of LBW found in some parts of the country (17.1%, 22.5%) observed in Gondar University hospital and Jima respectively6,7 and this difference might be due to these previous studies were carried out in specialized hospitals where many of the pregnant women were referred from the peripheral hospitals because of high risk pregnancy’. This must be rephrased

The 8th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th sentences of the discussion section are also clumsy and authors must rephrase them.

In the conclusion section the 3rd and last sentences are also clumsy and must be rephrased.

There are also wide spread of misplacement of propositions and omissions and authors must do well to correct these.

The reference style used by authors also appeared to be different from that of BMC pregnancy and childbirth and this must be revised accordingly.

The layout of the logistic regression table must be improved it is so crowded.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interest to declare.