Reviewer's report

Title: Household Food Insecurity and Mental Distress among Pregnant Women in Southwestern Ethiopia: A cross sectional study design

Version: 3 Date: 13 March 2015

Reviewer: Amber Hromi-Fiedler

Reviewer's report:

The revisions the authors have made to the manuscript significantly improves the quality of the manuscript.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Yes, it has been defined well within the context of mental distress and food insecurity.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The methods are described well, yet there are a few suggestion.
(Minor essential)
a) Lines 109-111: Include citations for the published maternal studies using the SRQ.
b) The sentences related to ethical clearance, consent, and confidentiality belong in the tools section, not in the data analysis section.
c) Cite Coates et al. in the HFIAS section to clarify where this scoring method originated.

3. Are the data sound?
Yes, given the HFIAS scoring algorithm used. (minor revision) Within the results section, the authors still list that farming was the main occupation despite that only 26% farmed. In addition, it would be better to report the % that owned agricultural land (42.7%) to show that more people owned land available for farming than actually farmed.

4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation?
Yes, yet the tables that are in the manuscript need a lot of revision (compulsory):
a) Table 1 and Table 2 are not easy to read (i.e. the titles of the columns and subtitles should be clearly separated from the results through a line, highlighting, bold, etc.).
b) Table 1 is misaligned in some places (i.e. family monthly income).
c) Income from table 1 would be better placed in Table 2 since it is being reported with socioeconomic and wealth data.
d) In table 2, please clarify what a bajaj is.
e) In Table 3: It is confusing to have the reference category vary from the top to the bottom for some of the variables. This reviewer recommends being consistent and having the reference category be listed at the bottom. In addition, the reviewer suggests the label be food insecurity rather than food security for the variable name.

f) Table 3 variables and results are misaligned in many places such as land ownership and previous hx of IPV.

5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   This isn’t clear.

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Yes, however it is recommended that the second paragraph be split into different paragraphs to differentiate between different topics discussed (ex. Line 212-213, “The magnitude…” should begin a new paragraph, line 228, “This study…”).

7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Yes.

8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Yes.

9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes

10. Is the writing acceptable?
    Yes, although the authors have many small grammatical and spelling errors that need to be addressed. A thorough read through to clear these up is recommended. Some examples are included here:

    a) Lines 32-33 – “A previous study done in Ethiopia also showed maternal distress was associated with child stunting and low birthweight” rather than “previous study done in Ethiopia also showed maternal distress was associated with child stunting, low birthweight
    b) Lines 111-112 – “…cutoff scores of…” rather than “…a cutoff score of…”
    c) Line 178 – Table instead of Tabel
    d) Line 272 – “We chose to…” instead of “We choose…”

**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:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare I have no competing interests.