Reviewer's report

Title: Beneficial Newborn Care Practices in Rural Eastern Uganda: a Cross-sectional Study.

Version: 6 Date: 18 August 2015

Reviewer: Katherine Semrau

Reviewer's report:

Summary: Data on the uptake and implementation of newborn care practices by women is limited. Researchers utilized data baseline data from the Maternal Newborn Study (MANEST) to present the baseline uptake of essential newborn care. The data is compelling yet some areas of clarification are required prior to publications.

Major Revisions

• It would be helpful to understand a bit more about the women included in the study. How did researchers find study participants? How many women were approached? Did all approached women consent for the interview? How many of the approached refused study participation? Who interviewed the women? Did interviews take place in the home or at a health facility?

• Were all children at least 1 month old at the time of the interview? If not, the definition of “good feeding practice” needs to be altered, as it currently requires that the child be fed only breast milk for the first month of life.

• Socio-economic status has a slightly mixed set of findings that would be helpful for authors to describe. Middle versus Low was significantly correlated with behavior but High versus Low was not. Can authors discuss this?

• Authors focus on district differences in practices; however, there are little differences between the two districts other than socioeconomic status (SES) and education levels. SES, education, and district may be collinear variables and thus inclusion of all in the final model may be inappropriate. Did authors assess collinearity among these variables?

Minor Revisions

• Authors interchange “cord” and “chord” for umbilical cord treatment. Please correct throughout the manuscript to “cord”.

• How is skilled delivery defined? Please add to lines 118/119.

• Lines 116-120 have missing parentheses. Please correct.

• Line 148 should be Cronbach’s alpha not “Cornbrash’s alpha.”

• Parity definition: does this include deliveries or pregnancies? Is this live-born only? Or was this defined as the number of children living at the time of the interview?
• Line 167 should read testing of correlation, not association.
• Was consent written or verbal? Please add to lines 186-188.
• Combine tables 3 and 4. Crude odds ratios data is duplicated in the two.

Discretionary Revisions
• What corrective measures were taken if data was incomplete (line 129)? Did women get revisited to gather the data or was data considered missing? How was missing data treated?
• “Peasants” may mean many things to different reader audiences. Is this the same as unemployed? Maybe consider using unemployed instead?
• Table 3. Inclusion of “distance to facility” needs to be bolded to keep with the format as presented.
• Define “assisted delivery” in Table 1. Is this c-section only or use of forceps as well?

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, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.