Reviewer’s report

Title: Knowledge and provision of misoprostol among pharmacy workers in Senegal: a cross sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 30 Aug 2016

Reviewer: Jennifer Blum

Reviewer's report:

Thanks for sharing this interesting and important paper. I have a few suggestions of how to improve the paper that I hope will be helpful.

For the abstract - I noted in the background that you mention that public providers mostly access miso through privately owned pharmacies - I think maybe the sentence or part of the background should note that for the most part, meds are always accessed through privately owned pharmacies in Senegal. Something like - "Privately owned pharmacies are integral in supplying medicines to the general public..."

I suggest reviewing all of the references - some examples:

ref 4 - this is from 2006, there are several updated pubs from WHO and others on maternal mortality / deaths attributed to unsafe abortion that you can include here ref 8 - can you add a published study here instead of a weblink. some ideas Derman et al, India study and/or Diop et al/Lancet Global 2016 Senegal study

For the WHO EML, the dates of each listing is incorrect. Miso for PAC was included in the 2009 EML, miso for PPH prevention was 2011. Can you double check on labor induction. I can't remember what year that was but it would be good to confirm (online and found this for labor induction in the 18th version of the EML: a 25-microgram vaginal tablet, for use in induction of labour, on the Complementary list (added in 2005))

I suggest adding citations for the Senegal studies mentioned in lines 109-110 (Sloan et al, Diop et al)
Line 111, remove webpage and replace with Diop et al 2016 Lancet Global paper on this study

Lines 116 - 117, perhaps reword - it seems odd to begin with reference 12 (2015) and say this contributes to reference 14 (2002). I think you can have an more up-to-date reference to replace # 14

Line 120 - you can add Hyman et al Contraception 2013

Line 126 - reference 16, suggest you add published papers mentioning this topic

Line 121 - 122 - suggest you remove phrase "and it is not known whether the product is being used for this purpose" I don't think you need this in the sentence and I disagree that its not pretty much known that its used for this indication globally.

Methods: can you say more about where the suburbs were - how may K/how long to travel from central Dakar - so that reader can better understand the geographical representation of the study (might be worth mentioning how many pharmacies outside of Dakar in the discussion and what the potential challenges could be to having access to miso supplies and information in those as well)

Line 193 - 194 - can you say what other conditions miso is registered for in Senegal. I thought it was only registered for PPH, PAC and ulcer - would be good for the reader to have the info on other conditions

Line 205 - I thought that if miso is blister packed, you don't need to worry about moisture. It might be helpful to mention how miso is generally packaged and how Misoclear is packaged for sale in Senegal.

Line 214 - one extra word to delete - either "about" or "on"
Line 230 - I think its important to clarify here (as you later mention in the discussion) that sales were overwhelmingly reported for - this reads a little differently but I think the key point is this is what people reported, not what actually may have happened.

In the section starting line 238, it would be helpful if you could include a summary sentence - you say 6/110 report selling miso to clients wanting to buy OTC, 52/110 didn't sell and then there is the para starting line 245 that seems to report the others. I think one concise sentence that summarizes all the data.

In general, throughout the results section I think having the N and the % is helpful, especially with these small numbers. eg 8% of 52, is...

Line 258 - you might quickly check online to see if reference 20 is now published

Line 266- you list two reasons here and 3 in line 236 - I know the third reason appears later in the discussion, but it reads a bit odd to be missing here.

I am not convinced by your comment that lack of pharmacy stock of misoprostol is a challenge for reducing maternal mortality, per se. Do you have any other citations that show that having miso in pharmacies reduces MM that you could add here or examples from other settings? Similarly, on lines 293 - 294, what are the "life saving properties". I think you could clarify further what you mean here.

Lines 301 - 303 - I think this is an important point and wonder if you can bolster the discussion of this topic using references from other studies conducted in abortion restricted settings. challenges to collecting data on abortion in general

You may want to add more detail to the sub titles on lines 224 and 238 to help with clarity in reading these sections
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

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.

Unable to assess

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
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?
If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

None.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal