Reviewer's report

Title: Establishing partnership with Traditional Birth Attendants for improved maternal and newborn health: a review of factors influencing implementation

Version: 0 Date: 10 Mar 2016

Reviewer: Edwin van Teijlingen

Reviewer's report:

Review of TBA review

Interesting and useful study which adds to our existing knowledge in the field of TBAs, an important part of the maternity care workforce especially in low-income countries. The paper is based on a well executed study which needs a little bit more attention in the writing up. Furthermore, similarly to many studies using secondary analysis the research approach is neither referenced in the Methods sections nor critically reviewed (i.e. mentioned in the limitations part of the paper).

Sentence 35-42 is far too long and would benefit from being cut in two if not three clear sentences.

In first paragraph Abstract give TBA in full on first use not second time, thus it should read:

Background: Recent World Health Organization recommendations recognize the important role Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) can play in supporting the health of women and newborns. This paper provides an analysis of key factors that affect the implementation of interventions to develop partnerships with TBAs …"

NOT:

Background: Recent World Health Organization recommendations recognize the important role TBAs can play in supporting the health of women and newborns. This paper provides an analysis of key factors that affect the implementation of interventions to develop partnerships with Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs)

line 37 give WHO in full.

Line 40 you need a comma between "…attendants (TBAs), countries …"

Line 48 give SBA in full on first use.
Lines 54-58 'TBA' is repeated five times, rewrite.

Line 59 replace "maternal and newborn health" with MNH.

Methods

Line 81 I expected a reference to 'secondary analysis' of research data. In fact the whole Methods section does not have one single reference to the main method applied.

Page 85 I am not sure but does BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth accept footnotes, especially ones like this one which looks like a reference to a protocol!

Line 91 should this be ".. countries' experiences…"?

Lines 124-125 Why use SBA once as abbreviation and once in full in: "… community-based SBAs (trained midwives), facility-based skilled birth attendants, …"?

130 use hyphen in "facility based staff.."

Page 155 why "… women's experiences…” but in line 122 not "stakeholders' experiences .."

Lines 289 the Limitations section has no reference to the limitation of secondary analysis of a method, rather than the limitation of the systematic reviews search techniques used in this study. Some of the sub-headings are too long.

References

The references are not all in same style. BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth uses the abbreviated reference style as in ref. 23, please be consistent.

Ref. 3 typo in inidiavidals,

Ref. 20 uses first and second names not last name & initial
Refs. 5 & 7 are different numbers of reference presented with et al. Be consistent!

Ref. 24 surely has a page number.

Tables

Both Table 1 and Table 2 could lose a few words in the descriptive text of the studies, to make each fit on one page.

**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.

Yes

**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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published
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