Reviewer’s report

Title: “If there are no female nurses to attend to me, I will just go and deliver at home”: a qualitative study in Garissa, Kenya

Version: 0 Date: 24 Apr 2019

Reviewer: Richard Kalisa

Reviewer’s report:

Please include all comments for the authors in this box rather than uploading your report as an attachment. Please only upload as attachments annotated versions of manuscripts, graphs, supporting materials or other aspects of your report which cannot be included in a text format.

Please overwrite this text when adding your comments to the authors.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript

Title: I propose change of your title to "If there are no female nurses to attend to me, I will just go and deliver at home": a qualitative study in Garissa, Kenya

Page 3 Line 40 "....and less than 50% of deliveries...." gives an impression that it might be anywhere between 0 and 49. An exact figure would be useful (Check: https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/OD71/OD71.pdf)

Page 3 Line 41-44 "The government efforts...." The sentence is speculative and may not provide enough information to a reader who is not familiar with the DHIS. The authors should consider indicating the actual changes of the free maternity care policy (What were the numbers before, during and now).

Page 3 Line 44-46: The sentence is unclear in its current context.

The authors should discuss trustworthiness and rigor in the study.

The authors should also expound on how data analysis was performed. What themes emerged from the data and what themes were pre-established? Who performed the analysis and how were conflicts if any addressed?

Page 10 Line 36-41: The paragraph is overreaching. What do the authors consider as "culture". Among the identified themes, which ones highlight cultural barriers? The conclusion of the findings made here is not reflect is the study findings especially the role of community leaders in MNCH!

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MNCH!

The authors should consider discussing further the phenomenon of conflict views of women and 
their partners on autonomy and decision making highlighted in Page 10 Lines 52-55.

Page 11 Line 36: Revise "(ref)"

Page 11 Lines 58-59 and Page 12 Lines 36-37: "Effective strategies to..." The statement is too 
broad and non-specific. The authors should attempt to highlight example of strategies that could 
influence social norms especially in light of their findings.

A major limitation of the manuscript is the focus on the negative aspects of MNCH service 
utilization "Barriers". A holistic view of both enablers/facilitators and barriers would have 
enriched the manuscript. In addition, the 32% of women in North Eastern including Garissa 
would have provided better insights into why they prefer health facility delivery and skilled birth 
attendance.

The other limitation is the failure of the authors to highlight the cultural and religious barriers to 
MNCH service utilization considering that this was the overarching rationale for the manuscript. 
If not were identified, the authors should indicate it as a limitation.

The manuscript would benefit from a supplementary COREQ (Consolidated criteria for 
Reporting Qualitative research) Checklist

Page 2 Line 21/22: "Data analysis..." The authors should consider instead to highlight the 
qualitative data analysis approach rather than the software only.

Page 5 Line 6-7: "One KII was conducted....." The sentence is unclear but also the participant 
(MCA Often) should be anonymised unless the MCA consent to be revealed in reporting.

Overall, the study is well-written with standard English language and the theme described in 
deepth. However, the findings are not novel and just confirm finding in other settings in the 
country. This makes it difficult in utilization of the findings in the study area and Garissa in 
general.

There is no information about how many participants were in each focus group discussion as 
well as how they were selected. How many women were approached and how many declined?
Who did the recruitment of FGD participants?

The justification for undertaking the study was given in the background but that could have been 
made stronger if the authors had made reference to other research that has been done in countries 
with similar maternal mortality rates. The reasons for home delivery have long been established 
though these may vary from place to place.
Please provide a copy of the interview guide used for both the focus group discussions and KII interview added as supplementary file.

The authors can add on their list of abbreviations APHRC and AMREF

References; 4 needs to be completed, 16 check out spelling of first author, 6 add & between Health Place

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**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

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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