Reviewer’s report

Title: Health, Nutrition, and Development of Children Born Preterm and Low Birth Weight in Rural Rwanda: a Cross-sectional Study

Version: 0 Date: 28 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Ronald Cohen

Reviewer's report:

I applaud the attempt to expand knowledge about the results of interventions in Rwandan hospitals to support neonates. These data are interesting but hard to interpret. There is no true "control" group, and as you point out, the ASQ-3 hasn't been fully validated in this Rwandan population. A large proportion, nearly 40%, of your study group was lost to follow up.

Can you tell us what the rate of survival to discharge from the neonatal unit was for Preterm/LBW infants during this time frame? Can you provide more information on outcomes for Term/non-SGA infants from the same hospital during this time frame?

Do you have any information on how accurate your clinical tool was for accurately diagnosing anemia? Was the diagnosis confirmed by hemoglobin or hematocrit checks on even a subset to ascertain sensitivity/specificity or PPV?

If I understand correctly, only about 3.5% of the followed cohort did well in all domains on the ASQ-3. This is a devastating statistic! Does this imply that > 95% of these babies will have some long-term neuro-developmental problems? What implications does this have for either the Rwandan government, or NGOs working in the country?

For clarity, you should use "IUGR" for describing intra-uterine findings only, and "SGA" for describing babies at birth. I also am unsure that terms such as "wasted" or "stunted" are universally accepted. Perhaps these could be changed to alternatives such as "growth restricted", "failure to thrive", "malnourished", or the like.

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.

No
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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Unable to assess

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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I recommend additional statistical review

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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