Reviewer's report

Title: Common mental disorder in Nyanza province, Kenya- prevalence and associated risk factors in 2013 and an assessment of change since 2004, using a repeat household survey in a demographic surveillance site

Version: 2
Date: 22 June 2015

Reviewer: Ryan DeLapp

Reviewer's report:

Major Revision

Introduction

p.2, lines 51-56: considering revising sentence. It is a bit long and the intended meaning is a bit lost due to the length of the sentence.

p.3, line 65: can you rephrase this sentence so that the description of population growth reads more clearly.

The introduction does a good job of providing a broad demographic representation of Kenya and, more specifically, the Nyanza Province; however, it is not clearly described what elements of the sociocultural climate of this province is a risk factor for common mental disorders. Specifically, the authors allude to the impact of the political and social violence of the province, but it is not clearly defined for the reader. In order to truly appreciate why the authors believe these social issues have an impact, it would be helpful to have 1-2 sentences clarifying the social and political obstacles faced by this sample.

Methods

P. 5, line 142-143: How were specific members of a household selected to participant in the study? Was it based on whoever was willing to participate? Did you all have a system for selecting different members?

p.6, line 147-149: It would nice to include 1-2 examples of “technical words and phrases” that were deemed uncommon. Importantly, this will help the reader gain a better cross-cultural understanding of the mental health experience in this sample.

p. 6-7, lines 162-201: Please provide psychometric data for the measures in the study. Specifically, were these measure created for this study or have they been validated in previous samples? More importantly, have these measures been validated in a Kenyan sample? Also, it would be helpful to provide some psychometric properties (e.g., internal consistency) to show the reader that these measures were reliable and/or valid in their measurement of the designated constructs. Also, if these measures have not been validated in a Kenyan sample, the inclusion of these values would provide a basis of comparison for future
research.

p.7, line 216: It is unclear why these specific household variables are considered specific risk factors for mental illness. Can you please explain conceptually why these variables are a risk factor for this sample?

Discussion

p.11, line 295: The authors do an adequate job providing a rationale for the increase in rates of CMD for women, but do not provide a rationale for the significant decrease in rates of CMD for men (i.e., approx 11% down to approx. 4%). What factors may have impacted the change in prevalence for men?

p. 12, line 341-343: please revise the sense

p. 13, line 360-361: I am curious. Did you all consider whether any of the social support or other risk factors acted as a moderator for the relationship between life events and CMD. Just wondering because I agree the change in relationship following the adjusted analysis is a bit odd.

p.13, lines 362-365: At first you report you found no "independent association" between social network size and CMD, which you say is similar to findings in Tanzania and South Africa samples. However, you also mention that your findings are similar to another study [72] where it appears that there was an association between social network size and CMD (i.e., large social networks associated with presence of CMD). This appears to be an inconsistency. Please clarify.

p.13, lines 367-369: I think I understand what is being purported here; however, I think another sentence or two could help better articulate your point. What do you mean by practical support? Why do you think the social network (especially if this network includes the members of the extended family) is outweighed by the demands?

Limitation to study

p.14, line 382: I would argue that another limitation of this study is the lack of measuring protective factors (i.e., cultural strengths). The current study does identify one potential strength/protective factor which includes higher education and appeared to measure the impact of social support (another potential protective factor). However, based on their observations and interactions with members of this culture, it would be nice for the authors to speculate on other protective factors that may be relevant. Also, given that the psychometric properties of your assessment tools were not provided, it remains unclear how much your findings were impacted by the reliability and/or validity of your assessment tools. Along these lines, there is empirical evidence suggesting the mental illness (and symptom expression) can differ cross-culturally and cross-nationally. Were there any concerns that the CIS-R did not fully or adequately capture the symptom expression of this Kenyan sample?

Conclusion
p. 14, line 390: Given that the general hypothesis of the manuscript is that the political and community violence would influence the rates of CMD, can the authors discuss reasons why their findings were not impacted by the environmental climate in the way they hypothesized. Were there any variables that should have been included in the study that may have captured the impact of the environmental climate?

p. 14, line 390: The current manuscript does provide data regarding the prevalence and risk factors for CMDs; however, it does not provide any data regarding the severity and impairment caused by these disorders. In a sentence or two, the authors should describe the benefits of future research including such variables. Importantly, these variables would help to provide a more comprehensive picture of the impact of CMDs on lives of this population.

Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract
p.2, line 38: Delete the random space
P.2, line 38: delete extra parenthesis

Introduction
p. 3, line 66: please delete the period and add a space between "43.2" and the word "million"
p.3, line 72: delete space in percent description
p.3, line 74: delete space between "high" and "levels"
p.3, line 86: add period at end of sentence
p.3, line 92: delete space between "comprising" and "situation"

Introduction: I understand that the primary focus of the paper is to identify risk factors for mental illness. However, I was wondering if there are any strengths/positive aspects of the Kenyan culture worth noting that might buffer against the onset of these disorders? If so, it would help to illustrate a more comprehensive picture of the Kenya culture; one that is not so heavily rooted in its deficits.

Methods
p.8, line 210: delete space between "non-psychotic" and "symptoms"

Results
p.9, lines 242-244: Please fix the use of parentheses here.
p.9, line 244: please describe what kind of "institution" is being referred to here
p.9, line 245: please describe what a "carer" is?
p. 9, line 253: delete extra space

Discussion
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests