Reviewer's report

Title: How can formative research inform the design of an iron folic acid supplementation intervention starting in first trimester of pregnancy in Bangladesh?

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Reviewer: ALINA FLORES

Reviewer's report:

Abstract and Paper:
The first line of the conclusion does not seem to match the paper. Line 271 indicates that the data did not indicate strong resistance from the community to taking IFA supplements – so, why are CHWs needed? Do the CHWs create this positive perception of IFAs? – this is not addressed in the paper. If there is no strong resistance, then introduction of IFAs early in pregnancy should be feasible regardless of CHW support? – How are CHWs influential? How are they the tipping point to supplementation? How do they create the demand? How do they lower the resistance? – these seem to be the points of more relevance to a statement indicating that their support is needed to initiate supplementation use in early pregnancy. These are not reflected in the paper. Under “Influence on decision making” the authors begin to address the role of the CHW; however, the quote in that section refers less to CHWs and more to timing of visits. It also seems like mothers in law are very influential as noted by the author – are they perhaps more influential than CHWs? Are they where the real intervention would lie? Under the Barriers category, it appears that providers are a barrier, specifically timing of prescription. How are CHWs influential here? Can they change that system? – if the authors are going to conclude that CHW support is critical, then an exploration of how they can overcome the opinions of providers and the late timing of prescription need addressing.

Line 302: The author indicates that the paper explores the cultural and programmatic feasibility of providing IFA tablets early in pregnancy in rural Bangladesh; however, the findings presented do not address feasibility. They qualitative data provided are examining perceptions of women and providers toward IFA, and potential sources of information for IFA supplementation. Looking at feasibility would include methods of dissemination, infrastructure, regulations, etc. The methods of the paper, therefore, do not fully meet the stated objectives.

Line 307: I don’t think authors can make the leap from not having a term in a language to a lack of concern. Were other terms explored? Perhaps ‘low birth weight’ is captured in another way or with another term? Indicating that a lack of a term presents a lack of concern seems to be a big, and perhaps untrue, assumption.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests: I declare that I have no competing interests.