Reviewer's report

Title: Knowledge and Attitude towards Rape and Child Sexual Abuse - a community-based cross-sectional study in Rural Tanzania

Version: 3 Date: 21 November 2014

Reviewer: Lene Symes

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All recommendations are discretionary

1. Question is well defined

2. Need for better description of study design, line 143. Perhaps: A cross-sectional, multi-stage, randomized, survey study was undertaken in May and June 2012.

   a. Under data collection and methods, p. 7, line 193, make the following minor change: “A pilot-tested and standardized baseline questionnaire was used. It elicited data on…..”

   b. Given that over 40% of the sample was men on p. 8, line 218, it seems that something about how interviews with men ended should be added. Perhaps simply dropping ‘other’ from line 218 would meet the need.

3. The data appear sound.


5. Paper meets relevant standards.

6. For the most part the discussions and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported. Some minor recommendations:

   a. The paragraph on p. 12, beginning line 341, is somewhat disjointed. The finding that men were less supportive of gender stereotypes and rape myths than women is important and may highlight the effect of on-going educational projects. The project “men as partners’ deserves some description. Is it educational? How is it delivered? Would an appropriate recommendation be that similar projects be developed for younger men and women? Does it help address the issues related to low education and status, poverty, and rural residency?

   b. For the same paragraph, line 344, drop ‘it’ so that the sentence reads: “Women who may be potential victims of violence justified and endorsed the rape myths.”

   c. The final sentence in that paragraph is not needed. It simply repeats the purpose of the study.

7. Study limitations are clearly stated. Some minor recommendations for wording:

   a. On p. 14, line 394, change suits to suited (past tense)

   b. The conclusion should include a sentence about the somewhat surprising
findings about men being less supportive of gender stereotypes and rape myths than women.

8. The title is focused on method not findings but does seem appropriate. To change to focus on findings, if that is important, one suggestion is something like: Among the rural poor in Tanzania men are less likely to endorse rape myths than younger women – just a suggestion since title works as it is.

a. About the abstract – some very minor suggestions:

i. On p. 2, line 39-40, delete the final phrase ‘in the last few decades’ from the first sentence so that it reads: Violence against women and children is globally recognized as a social and human rights concern.

ii. On p. 2, line 66, add ‘have’ so that the sentence reads: “Our study showed that these rural communities have poor knowledge on sexual violence and have accepting attitudes towards sexual violence.”

9. The writing is generally acceptable. In addition to the suggestions above here are a few more:

a. On p. 3, line 85, change ‘was’ to ‘is’ to keep tense consistent throughout sentence.

b. On p. 3, lines 91 – 92, put commas after also and survey so the sentence reads: “The same study also, in a 12-month prevalence survey, has estimated....”

c. On p. 4, line 123, put a comma after survivors and after victims.

d. On p. 5, line 127, Delete the first word, among, so the sentence begins: “Other barriers to seeking....”

e. On p. 7, line 193, put a period after used and then begin a new sentence. Note the questionnaire did not contain data but elicited data therefore perhaps: “A pilot-tested and standardized baseline questionnaire was used. It elicited data on....”

My recommendation is to accept after discretionary revisions.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

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 I have no competing interests.