Reviewer’s report

Title: Contraceptive Use before First Pregnancy by Women in India (2005-2006): Determinants and Differentials

Version: 0 Date: 14 Sep 2015

Reviewer: Jacob Mazalale

Reviewer's report:

1. Authors should consider revising title. If this study is on women who are already born, one can think of first delivery [my recommendation] or first pregnancy and not first birth. Before first birth sounds like the women are not yet born and that they will be born several times.

2. Authors should consider careful use of technical jargon. E.g. On page 1 of 12, in the abstract, line number 19, the word explore is misused. This term is limited to either qualitative research or mixed methods research. Please make sure that this is also check throughout the whole manuscript. In addition, the authors use the technical term "to limit their first birth" in line 42 of page 4 of 12. In family planning language, this is different from to space.

3. Authors should consider presentation of results. After analysis, variable names should be translated to a language that an average person would understand. e.g. on page 1 of 12 in line 22 in the abstract, the phrase "ever married women" does not sound like good English although it makes sense as a variable or when collecting the data. This can be translated to "women who have ever been married" or something better.

4. References are missing in many parts of the manuscript. e.g. The authors, on page 1 of 12 between lines 45 to 53, they mention the NFHS -3 but do not put any references.

5. If one of the objectives of the study is to do a trend analysis (as indicated in the objectives section - page 2 of 12 line 51), then the methods section (page 3 of 12 lines number 9-22) should also mention that NFHS -2 will be used as a data source.

6. The author should justify that women aged 15-34 (line 52 on page 2 of 12) are young women. Being 34, in my opinion, as far a reproductive health is concerned, is not ‘very young’.

7. Lines 33 - 36 on page 3 of 12 are repetitive of lines 57-60 on page 2 of 12.

8. Page 3 of 12 line 48 uses acronyms that have not been defined.

9. Page 3 of 12 line 56, I do not think your reader would be interested in the actual question number. Please check this for the rest of the section.
10. Use of the ampersand in prose. In good English practices, it is better to write "and" in stead of "&". "And" is a little bit more formal. Please check the whole document for ampersands.

11. The authors should consult a statistician on the interpretation of odds ratios in the results section of the manuscript (pages 7 and 8 of 12). For example, an odds ratio of 1.33 cannot be translated to "33 percent more likely" as in line 28 of page 7 of 12. This applies to the whole results section.

12. There is confusion of either legend of Figure 1 or the interpretation of Figure 1 by the authors. For example, lines 41 to 43 of page 4 of 12 indicates that the increase among 15-34 year old women who used contraceptives to space birth was 1.7 percent. This, is obtained by subtracting, at least I think, 7.9 by 6.2. This is a wrong calculation because the Figure shows that the rate in NFHS-2 is 4.4% and not 6.2%. Therefore the correct calculation should be 7.9% - 4.4% which results to 3.5 percentage points and not 1.7%. This also applies to the women group aged 15-49. In addition, if one subtracts a percent from another percent, the result is a "percentage point" and not just a percent.

13. The authors seems to suggest that there is already a law on minimum age for one to get into marriage. But on page 9 of 12, line number 48 and 49, they suggest that there is need for more stringent laws. Is the problem with absense of law or lack of law enforcement?

**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.

No

**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.

I am able to assess the statistics

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