Reviewer’s report

Title: Magnitude and factors associated with Intimate Partner Violence in Mainland Tanzania

Version: 0 Date: 12 Nov 2015

Reviewer: Mieko Yoshihama

Reviewer's report:

Using a cross-sectional survey, this study investigated the prevalence of intimate partner violence among ever partnered women in urban Mainland Tanzania. This topic represents an important public health concern. I first list several major conceptual and methodological issues, followed by other areas that need further clarifications and edits, which I hope would be helpful to strengthen the current manuscript.

One major concern is the lack of conceptual clarity on what constitutes gender-based violence (GBV), how the authors define it, and what (e.g., which specific types of GBV) they were referring to. In the paper, the authors predominantly use the term, gender-based violence (GBV); however, most of the time, they are referring to intimate partner violence (IPV). The authors are encouraged to re-examine the use of the terms GBV and delineate what forms of GBV they are discussing.

The lack of clearly articulated research questions is another concern:

It is important to clearly state what the main research questions are and describe the data analysis approaches employed to answer them. The statements such as "none of the selected independent variable was likely to be considered in the multivariable procedures" in the Data analysis section suggest that the authors' approach was data-driven rather than guided by the research questions.

Methodological issues, which are related to the above described lack of clarity regarding the research questions:
It is not entirely clear why the authors choose to use different timeframes in assessing the respondent's experience of intimate partner violence. What are the rationales for assessing the experience of violence in the 1-month and 3-month timeframes? What did the authors hope to learn from the data from these timeframes? And how were they planning to use the 3-month data, which were not discussed in this manuscript. Additionally, what are the rationales for assessing the perpetration using the 6-month timeframe while the 1- and 3-month timeframes were used for assessing the victimization?

In addition, the measures section does not describe the assessment of the violence that the respondents have ever experienced. Yet, the author(s) frequently present and discuss the proportion of respondents who reported having ever experienced specific types of violence.

Below are additional comments pointing to the need for clarification and/or edits to help strengthen the manuscript.

Introduction

Alcohol consumption is mentioned as a risk factor for GBV. Whose alcohol consumption was found to be associated with the perpetration, victimization, and/or both?

Did the authors obtain institutional review and approval in relevant institutions?

Sampling

When there are multiple eligible women in a given household, in what ways was a respondent selected? In addition to having been ever-partnered, were there other inclusion and exclusion criteria, such as age?

Process

In what ways did the authors "ensure safety of both study participants and of the interviewees"?
Was the respondent's participation in the study likely to be known to other members of the household? If so, what procedures, if any, were employed to lessen its negative consequence on the respondents' safety and willingness and ability to answer the questions regarding intimate partner violence?

The tool and assessment of GBV

What "minor modifications" did the authors make to the standard DHS questions? What are the rationales for such changes?

Discussion

What do the authors think of the lack of significant correlation between the socio-demographic characteristics and the experience of intimate partner violence? More substantive discussion is necessary beyond simply stating that "we did not find association."

Conclusions

Overall, what is the significant (not necessarily statistically) finding of the study? What does this study offer that other half dozen previous studies of intimate partner violence in Tanzania did not?

The authors state that there are "serious implications" of the finding regarding the women's using violence against their partners. What are such implications?

Overall, the authors are encouraged to discuss specific implications, especially those for the field/profession of public health.

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?
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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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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