Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence of breast-related symptoms, health care seeking behaviour and diagnostic needs among women in Burkina Faso

Version: 0 Date: 05 Mar 2018

Reviewer: Lydia Cairncross

Reviewer's report:

General Comment:

Dear authors, thank you for a very interesting, well written and relevant study which provides useful insights for low to middle income countries which begin planning a breast health service. Against the background of an alarming high mortality from breast cancer, very low knowledge base and poor health services, a study highlighting the diagnostic breast health need in Burkina Faso is clearly very important and has the potential for the methodology to be used in other countries in Sub Saharan Africa with similar socioeconomic and health system challenges.

Questions of clarification and interest:

Below are a few questions I would like to ask.

1. You mention that the semi structured interview used was partially based on the SOSAS survey done previously and also provide some detail about the content. Please could you expand on how this questionnaire was validated.

2. I note that only 15% of participants in the study were over 46 year of age. Such a young cohort clearly impacts on the number of women who have breast cancer related symptoms. Is this age distribution proportional to the overall population age range?

3. It is mentioned that the districts were randomly selected. Please expand on this explaining how many urban and rural districts were included in the randomisation process and how this was performed.

4. In your paper you comment that women who had self-reported symptoms that were suspicious for breast cancer were referred to their local health centres. How was this referral done? Were women advised to go to their local health facility or was there a more formal referral process? Also, were these health facilities supported to manage this greater influx of women with breast related symptoms?
5. Finally, please expand on whether women recruited into the study received training on breast symptom awareness and self-examination as part of the study intervention.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to review this study.

Dr Lydia Cairncross

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.

Yes

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

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
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