Reviewer’s report

Title: Women's knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) relating to breast and cervical cancers in rural Zimbabwe: A cross sectional study in Mudzi District, Mashonaland East Province

Version: 1 Date: 14 Aug 2018

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Reviewer's report:

PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS: To view the full report from the academic peer reviewer, please see the attached file.

REVIEWER COMMENTS FROM REPORT: The issue of knowledge and practices around cancer, screening and prevention are obviously critically important, so any research that attempts to shed new light on how we improve cancer detection, diagnosis and survival is warranted. However, a descriptive, cross-sectional study in a particular province may not necessarily move practice or policy forward. There is a massive literature on KAP around breast and cervical cancer, including in Sub Saharan Africa, rural areas and various other developing country contexts. Therefore, even though the information in this paper may be useful for local policy and practice, it wasn't clear if/how it will be useful more generally (i.e. publishable in an international journal). The authors need to be much clearer about this. More detailed comments are provided below.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:

Firstly, the authors need to justify the need to publish a localised study, especially given the huge literature in this field. The literature provides all of the same findings presented in this paper, so policy makers and people developing interventions may be better advised to read the systematic reviews. The authors need to be much clearer about why their data provide new and innovative findings in relation to the extant literature. Secondly, the authors talk about interviews and focus groups - the findings from these are not discussed at all in the paper, and the methods, data collection, sampling, recruitment and analysis require much more detail if they are going to include data derived from them. In the very short sentence on qualitative data analysis, there is mention of "quasi statistics" - what are these? The authors need to be very careful using statistics from qualitative data collection, especially due to the epistemological assumptions of qualitative research. Thirdly, a questionnaire was used, but we have not detail on it - validity, reliability, content, cultural context etc - much more detail required. Fourthly, there is no detail on the order of the methods - I assume the survey was undertaken first, data were analysed, and then the major findings were taken into interviews and focus groups in order to explain them - but this detail is missing from the paper. Fifthly, only descriptive statistics are presented, which simply tells us about the sample, but in no way tries to infer to a population. The one time the authors
cite a p value, they say "p=0" which technically can never happen - the probability can never equal zero.

ADDITIONAL REQUESTS/SUGGESTIONS:

See comments above

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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