Reviewer’s report

Title: Perspectives on contraceptive implant use in women living with HIV in Cape Town, South Africa: a qualitative study among primary healthcare providers and stakeholders

Version: 0 Date: 29 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Rena Patel

Reviewer’s report:

Overall: This study investigates an important topic of health providers' perspectives on implant rollout on the ground in South Africa, and particularly in the context of a DDI with EFV. A qualitative study is well-suited at understanding the context and nuances to what happened with the rollout. My biggest concerns with the paper in its current state are:

- The analysis and reporting of results does not synthesize their findings well, suggestions are in text below

- The methods used appear less rigorous than would be expected, perhaps this is an issue of communicating only, more suggestions below and consider using COREQ guidelines, for example, to help with improving reporting of methods

- There is no justification for included FGDs in this study, and no analysis is pursued separately for FGDs (i.e. the unit of analysis for FGDs generally is the group, and all the reporting in the current manuscript appears to be individual quotes). Please consider removing the data from the FGDs altogether from the manuscript.

- All sections seem to be longer than necessary, detracting from understanding the main messages of this manuscript

Abstract:

- The enumeration of the number of IDIs and FGDs should go in the results section, e.g. in the first line, not in the methods section (similar to a quantitative paper). Use this space instead to describe your methods in the study, e.g. subgroups you decided a priori, sampling strategies, etc.

- Please highlight the domains of your interview/discussion guides in the methods section

Intro:

- Page 4, line 8, please indicate which guidelines for the new paragraph
- Page 4, would highly recommend removing company or brand names if not necessary

- Page 5, first sentence of first paragraph is too long. Recommend breaking into 2-3 sentences.

- Page 5, line 19, would recommend citing the extent of the PK evidence now supporting the DDI

- Overall, the background section seems unnecessarily too long and the first several paragraphs could be condensed to highlight main points

Methods

- It's not clear why the researchers chose to use in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, and how the sampling was different between the two, how analysis varied between the two, when did you stop conducting interviews (decided a prior to interview certain numbers vs. until saturation of themes was reached)

- Page 8, lines 24-31, consider rewriting this paragraph to indicate main themes or domains explored in your study via the guides

- Page 8, consider including more information about the interviewer, and this person's background, power differential, potential effect on the interviews, etc. (i.e. reflexivity principles)

- Page 8-9, paragraph on analysis suggests a relatively non-rigorous approach to coding, with only one member conducting coding, no double coding by other study members, no consensus building for coding differences or theme interpretation. This should be acknowledged as a limitation.

- Page 9, organizing the results to "construct a sequence of perspectives" does not really mean much to me. Consider clarifying, perhaps you wish to state that you organized the results by the themes or domains you explored in your interview guides??

- As noted for abstract, the number of IDIs and FGDs, the demographics of your participants, etc. should go in first paragraph of results section

Results

- Consider adding additional identifiers to persons quoted, e.g. gender, number of years working in FP, etc. as they help contextualize the quotes better

- Please pick a consistent method of referencing the two groups (A/B vs. stakeholders/primary care providers)
Overall, themes and subthemes require more organization, if nothing else then dividing them into the two big domains explored in this study (i.e. A) what went wrong with 2012 rollout, and B) suggestions for improvement). In general, the results section reads as a long list of topics that were interrogated or arose during the interviews. The paper would be strengthened with more synthesis of the findings.

Discussion

Page 20, lines 42–47 (and also in results section), could you be more specific by what is meant by "physical harm" as reduced efficacy and an ensuing pregnancy is certainly a "physical" event?

Page 21, discussion on "street-level bureaucrats" is helpful, adding insights into their findings

Page 22, the paragraph before limitations comes across as a laundry list. Please consider synthesizing further.

First sentence in the limitations section is not appropriate. Most qualitative researchers would ascertain that numbers is not the goal of conducting the study. Likewise, instead of claiming that the containment was small, describe the study area further so that readers can judge the transferability of the findings to their respective areas or populations of interest. Also go the next step in explaining your limitations, e.g. what is the negative implication of English not being the first language of the participants?

Other limitations to consider include single study staff coding data, lack of theoretical framework guiding the study or analysis, and issues surrounding the interviewer and power dynamics.

Conclusions paragraph is too long! Consider synthesizing further and condensing.

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.

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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

Acceptable

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