Reviewer's report

Title: Reproductive health of women with and without disabilities in South India, the SIDE Study (South India Disability Evidence) Study: A Case Control Study

Version: 2 Date: 11 August 2014

Reviewer: Pat Doyle

Reviewer's report:

This study describes a case-control study of reproductive health in women with and without disabilities in South India, building on an earlier study of the prevalence of disability in the population. It is a novel study addressing an important, and neglected, public health issue in India.

I have several comments on the paper, mostly relating to more technical aspects of the case-control design.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Methods

1. I found the Methods section a little muddled. It would be useful to re-order the text to clarify the definition and sources of cases, the definition and sources of controls, data collection methods, and analysis.

2. The methods section had very little detail on the method of selection of the controls. More detail is needed to be able to assess the likelihood (or not) of selection bias.

3. The Statistical Analysis section is too brief. More needs to be added on the method used for adjustment of potential confounding factors in logistic regression. Also, was a power calculation done?

Results

4. Table 1. The vast majority of cases (72%) were described as “other”. More detail is needed here—perhaps as grouped categories—as the reader has no idea what type of disability is included.

5. Table 3. In the calculation of the mean number of births per woman and a history of miscarriage, it appears that the denominator is the total number of women (247 cases and 324 controls). This is incorrect. The denominator needs to be the number of women with a history of one or more pregnancies. This may change the conclusion that cases have more living children than controls.

6. Table 3. The way odds ratios have been presented in the table is non-standard. The authors need to (i) include 95% confidence intervals, (ii) provide a footnote to indicate what variables have been adjusted for in the
models, and (ii) consider presenting crude and adjusted OR for all the variables in Table 4 (and leave out chi-square statistics) to make the table more readable.

Discussion

7. Reference to use of contraception by cases and controls is speculative and should be mentioned more cautiously (and possibly changed considering the denominator issue mentioned in point 4 above).

8. The limitations of the study should be mentioned, especially the low numbers for some analyses and resulting low power to detect smaller differences.

Minor Essential Revisions


Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests