Reviewer’s report

Title: Sexual and reproductive health services for women with disability: a qualitative study with service providers in the Philippines

Version: 2 Date: 7 August 2015

Reviewer: Janet McCabe

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this article. I find the topic extremely compelling, the sexual health of individuals with disabilities is all too often neglected and the national and regional variations in attempts to address sexual health need to be further examined. I think that the authors have done an excellent job presenting the findings from the participatory action research project and I have outlined suggested revisions below. I would encourage the authors to consider publishing a manuscript based on their methods used to develop themes and the process of the workshop – this would be an excellent contribution to the literature, especially considering that this workshop included women with disabilities. I commend the authors on this. Also, there is mention that this study spans both a rural and an urban area – do the authors feel that this is a limitation of the study or a strength? Were there different issues raised? Perhaps this is another paper as well?

Overall the authors draw on relevant literature and situate the study and their findings within both global and regional findings.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) Research Question. It is clear that this project is a piece of a larger project, and that the objective was to contribute to the understanding of service providers perceptions, however the exact research questions need to be clearly articulated. I think that this research question is actually embedded in the methods section on page 7 (lines 179-182)?

2) Methods. The authors clearly worked diligently to include and represent the variety of service providers that interact with women with disabilities around sexual health care. It would be extremely helpful to have a better understanding of who the participants were. Perhaps a short demographic statement could be added? Perhaps this was not included to provide anonymity due to smaller number? Clarification on this would be greatly appreciated. The inclusion of a breakdown based on percentages of male/female, age groups of participants and number of different service providers (if possible) would help to paint a picture for readers of those interviewed. In addition, the provision of inclusion and exclusion criteria would help with this.

3) Methods. Additional information about interviews and the focus groups would help the reader to understand the context that information was gathered in, how
long were the interviews and focus groups on average?

Minor Essential Revisions

4) Readability. The background information provided is very informative and moves from a global to regional context, it would be beneficial to the reader to explicate that the initial information is global and not specific to the Philippines. I would suggest the inclusion of a heading “The Global Context” to situate the reader, around line 87 on page 4.

5) Methods. Line 208 on page 9 – this sentence needs a grammatical change to reflect that participants DID provide informed consent, not just that they were able to do this.

6) Structure/Organization. Line 427-431 on page 17 seems to belong in the “Capacity of service providers” section, as it is directly addressing the lack of information and lack of funding impacting their capacity to provide care.

7) Title. The title and abstract communicate what the study is about, the title could be changed to more accurately convey what has been found (e.g. Sexual and reproductive health services for women with disabilities in the Philippines: the need for support of service providers)

The article is well written, a quick proofread for passive language would be helpful, as well as eliminating the use of contractions (e.g. don’t and won’t).

Discretionary Revisions

8) Results. The results section is thoroughly enjoying to read, the authors provide concrete examples from their work to situate the themes. It may be helpful to the reader to provide a brief summary at the end of each theme to recap and situate the findings, often these sections end with a quote and leaves the reader wanting more or at least a summary. In addition this would help clarify the instances where ideas traverse across themes – such as societal beliefs/biases, the influence of religious beliefs etc.

9) Impact of Findings. The authors may want to consider the impact of these findings on the education of service providers in the Philippines, as well as address the overwhelming social discourse regarding women with disabilities and sexuality that is an undercurrent throughout the paper. There are certainly signals here that an intersectoral approach may be needed to gather the necessary statistical information to address violence against women with disabilities, but also to support their care.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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' below.