Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence and Predictors of Help-seeking for Women Exposed to Spousal Violence in India - a cross-sectional study

Version: 0 Date: 07 Apr 2016

Reviewer: Linda Bullock

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript makes a contribution to the science of intimate partner violence (IPV) and women's help-seeking behaviors in India by using cross-sectional data from the India National Family Health Survey collected between 2005 - 2006. This is a well-written paper, the title adequately describes the study and the abstract is specific and adequately structured.

Background: Background material is presented regarding the prevalence of IPV in India and cultural aspects unique to India that may be a deterrent for women seeking help. This information is contrasted with studies in other parts of the world. The organization of this section could be improved with the use of sub-headings. The purpose of the study is clearly stated.

Methods: The study design and the database used for this study are very well described including how the authors operationalized IPV for this study (used the term spousal abuse since all women were married). The questions used to construct each of the violence variables are stated. The description of the independent and dependent variables are also very clearly stated and how they fit into Heise's Ecological Model of Violence against Women is also very well described.

Data analysis: The data were analyzed using STATA and this is described and appears appropriate for the study.

Results: The results are adequately presented and the tables are helpful in interpreting the trustworthiness of the findings.

Discussion: The section of the discussion of how the results from this study fit into the ecological model is important and adds to the literature. However, the discussion lacks depth in how the findings moves the science forward and the policy implications are weak and seemingly contradictory to the introduction. For instance, one of the policy implications was just to educate police officers and the criminal law system. An important implication that was stated was ensuring all children complete primary education to help empower women. A more in-depth discussion of how the results can be used to advocate for this and how this could be achieved would strengthen the findings.
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?
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Yes

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I am able to assess the statistics

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