Reviewer’s report

Title: Timing of abortion among adolescent and young women presenting for post-abortion care in Kenya: A cross-sectional analysis of nationally-representative data

Version: 0 Date: 11 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Elisabeth Faxelid

Reviewer's report:

The topic is very important and the paper well written. I have, however, some concerns that I would like the authors to consider.

1. The concepts "timing of abortion" and "timing of abortion care-seeking" seems to be used interchangeably in the manuscript. However, these concepts are different and it would be better if the authors decide which concept to use.

2. The conclusion in the abstract stating that "Late-term abortions (induced) at or after 12 weeks were substantial....." is different from the conclusion in the end of the manuscript, which I prefer. The data does not really support the conclusion related to induced abortion.

3. In the method section one of the primary explanatory variables is "the nature of index abortion (spontaneous, induced) but I don't see this variable presented in any of the tables e.g. when the logistic model is presented in the result section. It is important to draw correct conclusions and stick to the actual data e.g. second trimester abortion, severity of complications etc. As far as I see we really don’t know the proportion of unsafely induced abortion in this material and the authors need to be careful when drawing conclusions. What is presented is that 61% of the women stated that the pregnancy was not wanted or mistimed. This might indicate that 39% was wanted and the abortion not induced but spontaneous. This need to be discussed in the paper. Often women who seek PAC are treated as they have induced the pregnancy, which often is not the case. Then these women are stigmatized although they have actually done nothing to end the pregnancy.

4. Fig 1 is also a bit unclear to me. Here it indicates that all women had an induced abortion, which most probably was not the case.
5. It is stated in the text in the result section that "A greater proportion of young women presenting for PAC for pregnancies terminated after more than 12 weeks of gestation (40%) than those presenting for pregnancies less than 12 weeks gestational age (33%) were aged 12-19 years". This statement is unclear. How do you know that pregnancies were terminated? Further, these figures are not presented in table 1 where results are presented differently. I would prefer to see the proportion of the two age groups who had early or late timing of abortion (or abortion care-seeking) presented in the table.

6. In the head of table 3 it is stated <12 weeks gestational age. It should probably be >12 weeks gestational age.

7. In table 3 it is shown that those who "wanted later" or "never wanted" a pregnancy actually had a lower risk of 2nd trimester abortion - how come? How does this relate to your view that second trimester abortion is more related to induced abortion?

8. The first sentence in the discussion is: "Post-abortion care for complications is a key indications that the initial procedure may have been unsafe". This statement clearly needs refs since many women seek PAC for complications related to spontaneous abortion as well. See my previous comment related to stigma.

9. Ref 24 is put after the statement that "Adolescents have also been shown to be more likely to seek clandestine abortion care than older women". I have read this ref and it can hardly be correct ref. Please check!

10. You state in the discussion that "young women in rural areas may be particularly vulnerable to problems associated with unsafe abortion". This might be a correct assumption but hardly shown in your data.

11. The suggestions in the conclusions are fine but I think the link to unsafe abortion is not clearly backed up by your data.
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.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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I am able to assess the statistics

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