Reviewer’s report

Title: Barriers and facilitators to uptake of cervical cancer screening among women in Uganda: a systematic review

Version: 0 Date: 13 May 2019

Reviewer: Maggie McConnell

Reviewer's report:

This paper offers a well-written systematic review on the literature surrounding barriers and facilitators of cervical cancer screening. I have some specific suggestions for improvements and clarifications to the manuscript:

1) It would be valuable to update the systematic review as the last search was done in 2017 and this is an active area of research.

2) On page 7 the manuscript reports that "Only studies of reported barriers and facilitators were chosen; studies that inferred correlations based on statistical associations with demographic features were excluded." However, in the results section the manuscript reports findings related to socio-economic and demographic conditions. It would be helpful to clarify the scope of the review and whether the intention is to discuss findings which may shed light on barriers and facilitators that are related to differences in take-up across socioeconomic and demographic characteristics.

3) I would in general be somewhat cautious about stating that anything can be concluded about the "most commonly reported barrier" -- does this mean reported by the greatest number of study participants? Reported in the greatest number of studies? Given the extraordinary range in methodologies, sample sizes and study scope it is bit difficult to support this kind of conclusion from the literature review at this point.

4) The manuscript overall focuses on barriers and facilitators from the point of view of interventions that could influence patients' behaviors, though some of the barriers at the health worker and facility level may be of more primary concern. For example, improving knowledge of screening will not improve screening rates if there are not trained health workers with adequate knowledge, materials and supplies to perform training.

5) It is difficult to interpret the proportions of women screened in table 1 without also including the nature of stay recruitment (i.e. whether the sample is designed to be population representative). This should be added.
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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