Reviewer’s report

Title: How Well Does Pre-service Education Prepare Midwives for Practice: Competence Assessment of Midwifery Students at the Level of Graduation in Ethiopia

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Reviewer: Caroline Homer

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this interesting paper. This is an important paper as it highlights the critical importance of skilled and adequately trained midwives in reducing maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality but addresses the challenges in actually educating such a workforce. The findings are shocking in many ways and very important as they show how just having schools that educate midwives is not enough. A whole of system approach is needed including accreditation of training programs, standards, clinical engagement to ensure access to clinical skills and learning and quality assessment activities. Not all of these essential elements were present in the Ethiopian system.

I recommend the paper is accepted with a few small changes and additions.

In the past 6 months a number of important papers/reports have been published which have direct relevance to this research. These are important as they highlight the need for quality maternal and newborn care and demonstrate that the most appropriate cadre to deliver this service at a primary level are educated, regulated and well supported midwives. Given that this journal is Medical Education, I think it is necessary to highlight these recent publications as the temptation for some in reading such a paper would be to put energy and resources into training more doctors – which are needed but not at a primary level. The publications also convey the importance of a collaborative team including midwives and doctors. The publications include:


Data were collected from students at training institutions (page 6, lines 118-125). It is not clear at what stage in the training were the students?

The recommendation at the end of the conclusion that a licensure exam should be introduced does not seem to be at all supported by the findings or have any
evidence to support this. I am not convinced that an exam is the answer and suggest that this is removed as a recommendation.

**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 am a co-author on 2 of the 3 papers I have recommended be included.