Reviewer’s report

Title: Community Satisfaction with the Urban Health Extension Service in South Ethiopia and Associated Factors

Version: 2 Date: 15 September 2014

Reviewer: Maryse Kok

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. In the abstract, conclusion you state: “a community’s satisfaction with UHEP has a significant influence on the community’s utilization of the services and implementation of the program.” In my view, this is not a result of this study, but an assumption. Satisfaction has been measured in your study, but not health care utilization or programme implementation. This is related to the introduction section, where you state: “community member utilization of the service is directly affected by their satisfaction with the services they receive”. Is this always the case? Can you provide a reference? Or could you refer to studies that proved this association between satisfaction and utilization? It also related to why you have conducted this study. Why did you want to measure satisfaction levels? (Because utilization of the UHEP was not optimal? To identify issues that could increase satisfaction and thus utilization?)

2. At the end of the introduction, you introduce health extension professionals. Are these nurses working at facility level? Or also at community level/outreach? The rest of the study, in the results section, the issues are related solely to HEWs and not to these professionals you introduced in the introduction section. This is confusing.

3. Discussion, 2nd paragraph: majority of respondents prefer female. This is just above 50% so I would not say this is a majority. It means almost half answered No. This needs more explanation. Apparently almost 50% of the respondents did not prefer female HEWs. What does this mean for the programme?

4. Discussion, 3rd paragraph: “this may be because the majority of respondents were full-time employees and they may not have had a convenient time to participate in different community meetings…”. Could be, but there might be other explanations possible. Are these meetings being held at all, regularly? Are community member actively invited by HEWs to attend these meetings? Do HEWs have enough skills to engage with their communities? In other settings this has proven to be a problem.

5. Discussion 6th paragraph, last sentence: how can you draw this conclusion from this study? This statement is quite strong. Was is from FGDs? Almost 50% thought females are not competent to deliver services!

6. The paper would have been stronger if, besides satisfaction levels, information would have been compared between people having used the health services and
those who did not use the health services in the past year/months, both pro-active or reactive (receiving visits from HEWs).

7. In the conclusion: the main conclusion is that the community was satisfied with the UHEP. What will you do with this information? And are there still issues for improvement that could be derived from your study? The last sentence seems obvious: if a community has a positive perception of HEWs, this has a positive effect on community satisfaction (on their services?). Coming back to a possible relationship between satisfaction and utilization would be interesting here. Are you concluding that people are satisfied so we need to keep the UHEP as it is? Is the utilization in the study areas already optimal? Or, maybe, high satisfaction is not the only contributing factor of utilization and more research is needed to see which factors could possibly contribute to improving utilization?

Minor Essential Revisions

8. Introduction, 3rd paragraph: “This HEP ensures health equity…” Isn’t it that the HEP is aiming to improve equity?

9. Methods section, under measurement, 2nd paragraph: UHEPs: the abbreviation is Urban Health Extension Programme. But, if you are saying “perceived technical competency or perceived interpersonal relationship with UHEP”, this is confusing. Do you mean the HEWs here? Or the earlier described health extension professionals?

10. All tables have to be referred to in text. Do we need all these tables? They could be reduced in number, as some info is double in table and text now.

11. Results section, under Perception of the community on satisfaction sub-scales: last sentence: should be in discussion, not in results section.

12. Discussion, 4th paragraph: information about HDA is new. Should move to results section, as something new in a discussion section is not advisable.

13. Discussion, 5th paragraph: same issue: was not explicit in results section. And the question is: what do these results tell us?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests