Reviewer’s report

Title: Determinants of maternal health services utilization in Uganda

Version: 2 Date: 24 September 2014

Reviewer: Milena Pavlova

Reviewer’s report:

The paper deals with an important issue, namely the utilization of material care. It is well structured and well written. The authors acknowledge previous work as well as the limitations of their study. Ethical considerations are also outlined. However I have several suggestions for major compulsory revisions:

1. The aim of the paper appears too late after 10 pages text. The background section should be divided into: 1. Background - introducing the topic, its relevance, the Ugandan context, the motivation of the research and the research objective (all together ca. two pages); 2. Previous research - including all other information related to previous studies.

2. The aim of the paper should be well motivated. What is the exact contribution of the paper to our knowledge? How the study is different compared to previous studies? This version of the paper suggests rather trivial results. As the authors point in the discussion, most results are expected and well registered in previous research.

3. The definition of the categories ideal, moderate and poor utilization is unclear. Are these mutually exclusive categories? How is the utilization variable constructed? A table with a narrative explanation in the methods section can be helpful.

4. In the multinomial regression analysis, the ideal utilization category should be taken as the base category and categories moderate and poor should be compared to it. This also implies changes in the results and discussion sections to account for the new analysis.

5. The discussion is limited to summarizing the results and comparing them to previous research. The results need to be discussed in terms of Ugandan context. This will also help to formulate more concrete recommendations in the conclusion section. In this version, the conclusion section is rather general and it does not well relate to the aim of the paper.

I also have several minor but essential comments:

6. Abbreviations are not properly introduced in the paper. Although a list of abbreviations is provided at the end of the paper. The abbreviations should be explained the first time they appear in the text.

7. The text should be written in past or present tense. For example: “The study will utilize datasets…” is clearly incorrect because the study is already carried out. The entire paper should be reviewed to account for this.
8. More information about the data collection procedure is necessary. Also, the response rate should be reported. How have authors dealt with missing cases?

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'