Reviewer’s report

Title: "Ways and channels for voice regarding perceptions of maternal health care services within the communities of the Makamba and Kayanza provinces in the Republic of Burundi: An exploratory study"

Version: 0 Date: 02 May 2016

Reviewer: Jean-Benoit Falisse

Reviewer's report:

I think the quality of the paper has nicely improved since the last version, and I commend the authors for their efforts. Some minor improvements in style, as well as presentation (e.g. the limitations section, which needs to be written as a paragraph rather than two bullet points) would help the text's fluidity.

There are some relatively substantial points, which, I believe, are the true original contributions of the article and would benefit from being flagged more explicitly:


- The question of the socio-political context as a barrier to voice. This is a really interesting reflection and it would be important to have something more about this. Similarly, it is not clear to me whether the point on politics actually refers to the current political system (or the situation at the time of the study) or, more largely, to a longer history of non-democratic rule and elite-capture. Importantly, the discussion would benefit from some reflection on the potentiality of the four identified voice mechanisms in light of the context that is described.

- The DHS survey has quite a few statistics that could nicely reinforce some of the points made by the authors, especially in relation to fears and relationship to nurses.

Some more minor points:

Introduction

- Number of women who died of pregnancy-related causes. Is this a big figure? We need some comparison point, maybe use the Global Burden Disease index to point out the importance of the topic.
- Something of why women are not accessing services need to be said, and supported by the literature.

Framework/methods:

- Responsiveness is different from the other two elements, and actually a consequence of these two elements, you may want to indicate this more clearly.

- VU researcher: nationality

Results:

- Respondent characteristics: I would say that it is more part of the methods than the findings - see whether you want to consider that option.

- Please check all the references in text - some are inconsistent (e.g. Barnard... is left in its entirety in the text)

Discussion:

- Some re-structuring of the paragraph with the different challenges would be useful (e.g. firstly, secondly, etc. or different paragraphs)

- Fora and potential options for Burundi - it would be useful to link this to some theory on accountability. See for instance Brinkerhoff (2004) on what makes a social accountability mechanism efficient.

Study limitation:

- See above, please make it a paragraph.
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?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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