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: 15 Apr 2016

Reviewer: Susan Rifkin

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Comments on Revised Manuscript now titled "Ways and channels for voice regarding perceptions on maternal health care services within the communities of the provinces Makamba and Kayanza in the Republic of Burundi: An exploratory study".

General Comments.

1. The revisions of the manuscript have improved the paper. The line of argument is clearer and many of the gaps identified in an earlier submission have been addressed.

2. The use of the English language is much improved and acceptable for publication.

3. The revision, however, appears to put together two different research papers. The first paper focuses on the topic identified in the title and in the purpose of the paper. The development of the topic is clear and logical. It describes the methodology well and includes the information about informants and tools used for interviews.

4. However the presentation concerning the Results and Discussion should be improved. The Results should contain the presentation of the data collected and leave the interpretation to the Discussion. In the present format, the Results also include much of the interpretation. Therefore the Discussion in some parts is a repetition of the Results. The sections reviewing Obstacles are those where repetition can be found.

5. The second paper is about participatory approaches to improving services through voice. The presentation here is more problematic. The authors put forward the way to improve is through community participation focusing on participatory approaches. It is important to note that participatory approaches are only one way to pursue community participation. The approach, which is used more frequently, is social mobilization.
6. Participatory approaches are much more complicated than social mobilization. The latter is mostly seen as an intervention. Although much of the literature includes viewing participatory approaches as an intervention, it has been argued in recent papers it is more appropriate to view these approaches as a process that includes not only health improvements through services but also includes empowerment of intended beneficiaries. Such approaches must deal with concerns about power and control and must be seen in the specific context of the community in which the approach is to be applied.

7. The discussion in this paper about participatory approaches appears to view participatory approaches as an intervention and has the underlying assumption that they can be generalized without consideration of context to specific communities within their local context. To make a substantial contribution this presentation would need a much more detailed framework and data concerning the feasibility of the suggested actions in the context of the communities identified in the study.

8. My suggestion is that the paper could identify participatory approaches as one way of addressing the obstacles identified and the section which references where these approaches have been used to some effect be kept. Then in a final paragraph could suggest that on the basis of previous experience such an approach might be developed in pilot communities in Burundi.

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.

No

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:

Acceptable

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