Reviewer’s report

Title: Are family planning vouchers effective in increasing use, improving equity and reaching the underserved? An evaluation of a voucher program in Pakistan

Version: 1 Date: 05 Apr 2018

Reviewer: Mellissa Withers

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this interesting manuscript. I thought the study is an important one, shedding light on effective interventions to promote family planning and remove health care access among the most underserved communities. In addition, it adds to the evidence base that supports the use of vouchers in health promotion in developing countries. A major strength is that it is an evaluation of an intervention with a large sample size. Another major strength is its focus on health equity and the concentration index analysis. It is generally a very well-written paper that is easy to follow. It makes an important contribution to the literature and would be of interest to a wide audience.

Here are my comments:

- the background is useful and provides information about the context in Pakistan.

- there are a lot of up-to-date references cited.

- the methods are very clearly described and seem appropriate

- the tables are well-one

- it seems that the results are overwhelmingly positive, with particular focus on improving LARC. The authors highlighted the policy implications well in the discussion section.

- It is interesting that the control group's contraceptive use also increase quite a lot. It seems that the intervention period was about 2 1/2 years. I feel it is important to acknowledge these findings and to provide some possible explanations for this. Maybe there were societal changes taking place at the same time that allowed more access to contraceptives?
- I wonder if the healthcare system was impacted at all by the increased use of services during the study period. Was quality of care affected at all?

- I also liked that the authors discussed the importance of the inclusion of men in family planning studies and services. I also thought the focus on equity was a major strength of this study.

- The paper needs a review of minor formatting problems and some typos.

**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.

I am able to assess the statistics

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

Acceptable
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