Reviewer’s report

Title: Improving Emergency Obstetric Referral Systems in Low and Middle Income Countries: A qualitative study in a tertiary health facility in Ghana.

Version: 0 Date: 04 Sep 2019

Reviewer: Eric Nsiah-Boateng

Reviewer's report:

General comments

The study is relevant to policy makers in Ghana considering recent cases of deaths due to transfer of patients from the lower to higher levels of care for further management. It is also relevant considering Ghana's quest to improve management of maternal care and reduce maternal and infant mortalities towards attainment of SGD 3.

This is a well-written paper. The authors provided overview of the subject studied and the health care system in Ghana. The method used is also sound and the results well-structured and articulated. In Addition, the discussion and conclusion support the findings. However, the authors are requested to fix the following minor issues:

1. Although, the authors in some cases, mentioned the respondent (health professional, patient or relative of the patient) in the narratives before the quotes, it would be better for them to insert the type of respondent in bracket at the end of the quotes.

2. The authors need to exercise professional judgement in the quotes to bring more clarity. For example, Page 7: Line 15-16: insert "of the hospital" after "went to the back" and on Page 10; Line 44: change "gate" to "entrance of the hospital"; and on Page 10; Line 58: insert "teaching hospital" after "Korle-Bu"

Specific comments

1. Page 2; Line 24: Use low, middle and high income countries definition for "developing and developed countries" as recommended by the World Bank. E.g. low and middle income countries (LMICs). Kindly effect this change in the entire manuscript.

2. Page 2; Line 53-54: "(1) delays in recognizing danger and deciding to seek care in the household" sounds ambiguous. "...in the household" can be deleted to bring clarity.

3. Page 3; Line 41: insert abbreviation (KBTH) after Korle Bu Teaching Hospital

4. Page 4; Line 10-11: provide reference for ".....80% of referral cases resulting in maternal deaths each year"
5. Page 4; Line 42: change IDI to IDIs
6. Page 2; Line 24: Use low, middle and high income countries definition for "developing and developed countries" as recommended by the World Bank. E.g. low and middle income countries (LMICs). Kindly effect this change in the entire manuscript.
7. Page 2; Line 53-54: "(1) delays in recognizing danger and deciding to seek care in the household" sounds ambiguous. "...in the household" can be deleted to bring clarity.
8. Page 3; Line 41: insert abbreviation (KBTH) after Korle Bu Teaching Hospital
9. Page 4; Line 10-11: provide reference for ".....80% of referral cases resulting in maternal deaths each year"
10. Page 4; Line 42: change IDI to IDIs
11. Page 5; Line 45-50. This information is captured under the "Data collection" section. Besides, the secondary data were only used for literature review. Therefore, the "Sources of Data" section can be deleted.
12. Page 6; Line 22-26: This section can be deleted and added to the "Ethics approval and consent to participate" section on page 14
13. Page 7; Line 9: "Similar sentiments were........" is not part of the data extracts or quotes. Kindly remove the italics.
14. Page 7; Line 40: change "hydrate to "hydrated"
15. Page 9; Line 38: change "of" to "for" after "ask"
17. Page, Line 23-24: change "Ghana Health Service facilities" to "public facilities"
18. Page 14; Line 19: Define GHS and CHAG

**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:

Acceptable

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