Reviewer’s report

Title: Consequences of armed conflict on maternal and reproductive health in post-conflict Africa: A qualitative study of Burundi and Northern Uganda

Version: 1 Date: 20 November 2014

Reviewer: cari clark

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Overview
The paper addresses an important area of research. The data seem to have been collected and analyzed appropriately. Some areas are mentioned below that could strengthen the paper’s contribution to the literature.

Major
1. More clarity is needed on who the respondents are. Much of this in the supplementary material, but a good understanding of the participants is needed in the main text. Demographic (e.g. age, sex, job classification, information is needed in the summary table and the quotes need clearer attribution. This is particularly important since it is not clear whose voice is being heard. There are multiple quotations from a policy maker, it is not clear if one person’s voice is being used to represent the themes or if these are multiple policy makers. It is also not clear what an LHP is.

2. In the results section, it would also be helpful to limit redundant mentions of the same main point and to remove themes / points that are not related to change in health / services during and post conflict. For example is not clear if low use of modern contraceptives had anything to do with the conflict. Similarly, is there a relationship between the policy of waiving user fees for pregnant women and the conflict?

3. Background data, especially the data highlighted in table 1 could be improved by comparing pre conflict to post conflict data instead of just most up to date stats. The most up to date information is less informative to the focus of the paper than making the point that conflict had an impact on MSRH. Some Countdown 2015 report also offers earlier reports than the ones presented. Might consult these earlier ones for interim dates. Also, the links below might be useful to characterize change over the conflict.

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/burundi_statistics.html

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uganda_statistics.html

4. Importantly, the improvement of services during the conflict is given relatively little space. Does this reflect the frequency of its mention? It seems like an important point but does not seem to be given much space in the results section. If it was poorly mentioned, than this is appropriate, but if not, a more detailed
presentation of these findings might help to inform future efforts. It also speaks to the existing literature on addressing MSRH in conflict settings which is focused more on humanitarian missions. This literature is relevant to this particular research question but does not seem to be mentioned. The issue is given space in the discussion and is nuanced by the fact that a relatively small amount of the population accessed these better services. These data seem to have something to offer this community and this could be addressed more fully in the discussion section.

http://www.rhrc.org/
http://womensrefugeecommission.org/programs/reproductive-health

Minor
5. Abstract concludes with differences across settings, but none were mentioned in the results. The comparative perspective is a strength of the paper, so major differences might be acknowledged in the abstract results which would bring it in line with the conclusion.

6. Acronyms need to be spelled out at least once before being used and consistently use acronyms (e.g. MSRH, MRH).

Discretionary
7. Not that it is essential, but there is a detailed literature on the impact of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict on women’s fertility.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests