Reviewer’s report

Title: Awareness and perceptions on the right to adequate food after a major landslide disaster: a cross-sectional survey of two districts in Uganda

Version: 3
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Reviewer: Elizeus Rutebemberwa

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for this opportunity of offering my thoughts on this important topic. Nutrition is an important aspect of public health and in disaster affected people, it is even more critical that they access adequate food. I salute the authors for working on this critical topic. It has been a pleasure for me to read it. It has very many positive points which are so many and I may not be able to highlight many of them in the comments below. The comments I give are to make the manuscript better and they should be taken as such. They are focused more on the points for improvement although it has to be stated that there are very many good aspects of the manuscript that will not appear in the comments. Please find below my comments in line with the format in which the manuscript is to be reviewed.

Major compulsory revisions

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?

The question posed by the authors is very good but is not well defined – at least in some aspects. It needs to be improved. The issue being discussed according to the title is ‘awareness and perception on the right to adequate food’. The objective as stated in lines 79 – 81 is to establish whether in the aftermath of the major 2010 landslide disaster, people conceived of their right to adequate food differently when they are victims of a disaster and subsequent experiences, than those who did not experience the same events. Is what they conceive the awareness and perception? Looking at table 2 where the title suggests that these are perceptions on the right to adequate food and relief food during disaster in Uganda (p.39), isn’t there a difference between perception on the right to adequate food and perception on relief food during disaster in Uganda? Perception on relief food is not part of perception on the right to adequate food and it is neither in the title nor in the objective in lines 79 – 81. Most of the discussion is actually in the perceptions on relief food. The authors need to be consistent on what they want to give in the manuscript and this should be the same in the title, in the objective, in the results, the discussion and conclusions with recommendations. Let the authors harmonize the title, objective, results, discussion and recommendations. It would be good to reflect on the question being asked and the main outcome of the study. Is it awareness or perceptions? Awareness seems to be scanty and not coming out very clearly. The authors need to strengthen this.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
a) This is a comparative study (lines 77 – 78) and for a comparative study, it is critical that the characteristics other than the outcome variable between the affected areas and the control areas be as similar as possible. However, in this case the control area in Bududa and Kiryandongo were very different from the affected areas (lines 235 – 253). With these differences, the authors need to assess whether these differences affected their outcome of interest and if they did how the outcome of interest was affected. This analysis is lacking from the manuscript. The readers would benefit from an analysis that takes care of the differences between the affected areas and the controls and how these differences affect the outcome variable.

b) The setting of the study is indicated but could be improved. Some of the issues that the reader may want to see but are missing are: the time this study was done. What is indicated was that the land slide took place in 2010. Was the study done immediately after land slide in 2010, in 2011, in 2012, in 2013 or even in 2014? If I missed it, I am sorry. However, I seem not to have seen it in the manuscript. In Bududa district, it was Bukalasi sub-county which was selected (lines 109 – 110). These sub-counties were sharing a border (line 112). The one affected sub-county in Kiryandongo was Mutunda but the authors say that it shares a district (line 115) with Kiryandongo sub-county which was a control. What is not clear is whether even in Kiryandongo, Kiryandongo sub-county shares a border with Mutunda sub-county as it was done with the affected and control sub-counties in Bududa.

3. Are the data sound?

a) There is a lot of sound data presented. The authors have actually amassed a lot of data. However, there is also some speculation which the authors use to support their arguments. For example, in line 454, the authors say somebody ‘who purported to be member of one of the village executive...’ and then they go to give his quote to support their arguments. Why didn’t they find out whether he was on executive or not? In line 493 the claim could not be verified. In line 497, the participants is said to have claimed to have missed out. In lines 516 and 517, the authors talk of sentiments that were said but not verified. Why did the authors not verify all these claims and yet they make them a basis for their arguments? Do we the readers then believe their data based on claims? The authors need to explain the objectivity of this information. In line 670, the authors get an impression that is not backed up by data and continue to make a policy based on it in line 672. This is not fair. Arguments need to be based on data.

b) There are apparent contradictions in the results and the authors need to harmonize this. For example in lines 463 – 466, the authors say that the discussions were shallow and there was low awareness. This is repeated in lines 521 – 524. If these discussants were actually not aware, then what results are they giving us? In lines 470 – 472, the authors say that they neither observed nor report any specific differences in the responses that could be linked to status of being affected or controls in each of the districts. How does this compare with their results in table 2?

c) This study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This is
essentially a mixed methods study and this is very good. However, the methods need to complement each other. In this study, the qualitative results are given separately from the quantitative results. The quantitative results are from line 231 – 288. The qualitative results then start from lines 289 – 524. There should be integration of the results so that the reader can see how the quantitative and qualitative complement each other.

4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation?
   There is only one figure which is figure 1. It looks genuine.

5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   The tables have questions that are going through all the columns. I think the columns for variables should be distinct from the other columns.

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   a) There is discussion of results from another source and not those displayed in the paper (lines 603 – 604). As a reader, it would be good to discuss the results that the reader can have access to in the manuscript.
   b) In the discussion, the qualitative results seem not to be well represented. This needs to come out more. The qualitative results seem not to have a fair share of the discussion yet there were very good results that would enrich it.

7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   The limitations are explained in lines 632 – 648.

8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Authors acknowledge the work of others in the reference section. However, their introduction should have highlighted work done in this area and the gaps remaining. Putting a paragraph on the work done on awareness and perceptions on the right to adequate food globally, regionally and locally would make the manuscript better.

9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   As discussed above, much of the information in the manuscript is on perceptions about relief food and this is not reflected in the title.

Minor essential revisions

10. Is the writing acceptable?
    It is alright apart from some minor errors like: line 585, there is a missing word between ‘played’ and ‘humanitarian’; line 601, ‘how the’ is repeated; line 621 – there is a missing word between ‘adequate’ and ‘during’. However these are minor and the authors will easily fit them in.

Discretionary revisions

11. The target sample was 1200 (line 128) but the actual number interviewed
was 1,097 (line 233). Did the authors find out whether the socio-demographic variables for those that were missed were similar to those that were interviewed? The response rate is still high but if they got those variables, it would be a plus.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

Responding to the questions above, I certainly have no competing interests.