Reviewer's report

Title: Why Muslim women in northern Ghana do not use skilled maternal healthcare services at health facilities: A qualitative study

Version: 3 Date: 3 February 2015

Reviewer: Yulia Izati

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Minor essential revisions

Comments

Please change word “doctrine” in line 438 and after. Doctrine sounds a negative word. I would suggest mentioning that covering is what Muslim women believe in practicing their religious rule. Maybe you could also put information that not all part of body should be covered, only some part of body (i.e. hand, face are OK to be uncovered). Covering is one of many religious rules and duties in Islam. Muslim woman who want to practice the religious rules can practices this rule. It is the same as other religious rules which allow people to choose and willing to practicing the religious rules in their life.

Table 1 and 2:

Please explain definition of dispensary technicians mean... does it correlate with health services provision?

Is there any traditional birth attendant (TBA) available the area? As the skilled delivery is very low in the area (73% gave birth at home). So, the women gave birth at home assuming with help of TBA (?). Pleas provide the number in the table.

Marital status of women: Single (16). Quite surprising to have single women to be pregnant or either have delivery in certain period, since in Islam, it is not allowed that unmarried woman to be pregnant (although in some cases, i.e. rape, this is possible). Please do double check that actually the woman was the second (or more) wife; so actually maybe she is married in a polygamous situation. What is the definition of separated that you use here, why is it different with widow?

Change doctrine in line 480.

Line 794 and 795: Your words impress me that Islam as a whole religion has limited women in accessing health care. I would suggest: “the findings of this paper highlight the relevance of few religious rules and duties in Islam that could affect the low use of health care services in the regions”.

Line 809: “impact of Islam on gender…” Suggestion: impact of few rules in Islam on gender
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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'