Reviewer's report

Title: Clinics and Churches: Health Seeking of Older Women with Noncommunicable Disease in Rural South Africa

Version: 2 Date: 12 December 2014

Reviewer: Kenneth L Leonard

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions.

For a non-qualitative researcher, many of the concepts involved in designing your sample are not easy to understand. I illustrate with the following quote: "we ... concluded our selection of participants once it had become clear that the initial coding categories were exhausted."

This is surprising to me because 13 respondents seems very small. Please explain in more detail how the coding categories were exhausted. Did you have one of every kind of participant where kind is measure by village and number of illnesses?

Since you have three villages, what are the differences between them and why were they selected? How do the responses vary by village or number of illnesses? These categories disappear from the paper even though they were very important in your sampling frame.

One of the findings in the paper is that these women are not excluded, but all of the women lived in villages with clinics and all of them have a pension. The first may differentiate them from other women in South Africa (I don't know) and the second clearly differentiates them from other women in Africa. You need more discussion of these facts.

Minor Essential Revisions:

The article highlights the important role that these women play in their own health. This is an important contribution to our understanding. But it sits alone and it would benefit by more context.

The facts that women do not complain about their health facilities and simultaneously exercise their right to avoid them and seek others is particularly interesting. There is a significant literature documenting and discussing these features. I have a recent paper that summarizes this literature that the author may benefit from reading (though they do not have to cite it). "Active Patients" Health Policy and Planning 2014

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
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