Reviewer’s report

Title: Intimate Partner Violence Against Women Married as Children: A Qualitative Study in Urban Slums of Lahore, Pakistan

Version: 1
Date: 5 March 2015
Reviewer: Alexia Sabbe

Reviewer’s report:

Overall, the theme of this research study is important in settings where little or no data exists about the experience of IPV among those affected by child marriage or early marriage. The following points were highlighted to clarify:

Major essential revisions

1. The paper is in need of serious professional edit for English language, syntax, grammar and style. A thorough edit will render the paper more clear and coherent.

2. In the abstract, the authors mention 20 participants who agreed to participate. Later on, in the ‘Methods’ section, the authors state that 19 women agreed to participate. This is confusing, so it should be altered in the abstract so as to accurately reflect the number of participants in this research study.

3. In the last paragraph of the abstract, authors put forward that strict laws against IPV and child marriage may help reduce the child marriage practice and IPV against women. This is not reflected nor mentioned in the ‘Discussion’ or ‘Conclusion’ section of the main manuscript.

4. In the ‘Results’ section, under the header ‘psychological violence’, it is stated that qualitative data revealed that women’s mobility or access to information is not restricted in couples from the same age group. It is unclear what the ‘qualitative data’ refers to. Is a reference to external literature missing, or are the authors referring to the data they collected from the research study?

Minor essential revisions

1. In the ‘Results’ section, under the header ‘threatened physical violence’, a quote is assigned to a participant in mid-twenties, uneducated, and married at the age of forty years'. This is an overlooked error.

2. Throughout the manuscript, there are inconsistencies with numbers. For example, sometimes the authors mention ‘13 of 19 (participants)’, and other times reference is made to ‘nine of 19’. Also when referring to participants’ age of marriage in the quotes, sometimes the numerological indicator is given for their age (f.ex. 13 years), and other times it is written (f.ex. fifteen years).
Discretionary revisions

1. The article could provide more information on the legislative framework regarding IPV and child marriage in Pakistan. Does Pakistani legislation incorporate a minimum marriage age? Is marital rape a punishable act?

2. What is the reason for the choice of 20 women? And could more details be provided about the geographic representation of the participants among the 6 selected localities?

3. For enhanced clarity, respondents could be given numbers or false names in addition to age, educational level, etc. This would enable the reader to judge how often individual respondents are drawn upon.

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

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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