Reviewer’s report

Title: Coping with ill-health: Health care facility, chemist or medicinal plants? Health-seeking behaviour in a Kenyan wetland

Version: 0 Date: 30 Jul 2018

Reviewer: Nerges Mistry

Reviewer's report:

This is a well written manuscript with a strong theoretical grounding. Compliments also to the authors for undertaking this difficult study. The observations are relevant and critical for the design of health systems and community engagement strategies for vulnerable locations in LIC and LMICs.

I have the following comments on the manuscript.

1. Though overall the manuscript is well written, it is recommended that the authors review it for minor editorial corrections eg. line 36 the word "determinitive" needs to be replaced with "determining"

2. There is no mention in the Methods section as to when was this study undertaken

3. It is also relevant to mention as to who undertook the interviews and surveys for the stud and what waas the design of quality checks undertaken, if any.

4. It would be desirable to mention the severity of the reported conditions in the syndromic surveillance since it would have a strong bearing on help seeking behaviour (HSB). While this aspect is discussed, definitive data on severity and its direct correlation with help seeking would be powerful data

5. The methods also do not stratify the syndromic surveillance data according to age. It therefore makes it difficult to judge whether age of the patient was a modifier of HSB or effected the type of treatment sought eg. were children made to take more traditional medicines or allopathic ones.

6. The predominant locations of service sector workers needs to be mentioned in the text as well as in Fig 2.

7. The manuscript could be bettered with some quotes (and perspectives) from the community health workers since they work at a level where the rubber hits the road. Often their perspectives differ from those running health programmes

8. In the Discussion, School Health Education maybe an important approach to highlight if
appropriate in creating an intergenerational knowledge base that could impinge on optimizing HSB in the future. The grassroots cadres could help in achieving this. In this context, the current level of formal education in the study region could be described more explicitly

9. In presentation, the tables need to be better spaced out and formatted

10. Titles of figures 7, 8, 9, 10 definitively need to be improved eg. the expression of data as % needs to be mentioned in the Table. Additionally, the titles are all identical. The titles should contain the basis of characterising HSB viz.

   by symptoms (Table 7)
   by distinct target groups (Table 8)

   Title of Table 9 is confusing. Do the authors mean to demonstrate the reasons for self care or no care based on the symptoms
   Similarly for Table 10, do the authors mean to demonstrate the reasons for self care or no care by the different occupational groups.

   additionally, clear statement is required as to what proportion of persons did not seek any help at all (not even self care) for their conditions and what were the reasons for this.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics
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Acceptable

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