Reviewer's report

Title: Rethinking obstetric violence and the “neglect of neglect”: the silence of a Labour Ward milieu in a South African district hospital

Version: 1 Date: 09 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Reddy Bhavya

Reviewer's report:

Overall comments:

- While the revisions now include data from the patient interviews, the paper still draws very little from them compared to the provider interviews. It is also unclear how the themes that emerged from providers and patients respectively were treated analytically to arrive at the two primary themes discussed. One option moving forward is to exclude the patient interviews for this paper.

- The revised discussion section makes strong and sharp arguments, however the conclusion doesn't have the same focus. For instance, the first paragraph in the conclusion seems tangential, it doesn't elevate previous discussions.

- Re-check for minor language errors.

Specific comments:

The second paragraph on page 5 should be limited to what the authors were interested in knowing and asking as research questions, not what was found. The sentence "The trauma was found....left unseen" gives away too much too early. Also, the work of Music should ideally be discussed earlier, to set up your research question/objective.

Page 7, line 17 - By similar do you mean other private tertiary hospitals in the area?

Page 7, line 19-20. It would help to qualify this statement. Do you mean that in these communities women have higher pre-existing conditions when they enter pregnancy, or that they have poorer health/healthcare seeking practices in the antenatal period etc. Or does KH face a much higher patient load that makes medical management difficult. If not, with comparably good quality obstetric care, why are similar mortality rates notable?
Page 9 - Paragraph one indicates a four week observation period, paragraph two indicates a six week observation period - please resolve

Page 21 - The first two quotes link back to patients being treated like diagnoses and not people, which was already covered on page 18. Keep similar quotes in the same section (also, you may not need all three to make the point). It feels repetitive to place them after other sub themes have been discussed.

Page 24 - High patient load not turnover of patients

Discussion-

The patients' quotes indicate neglect in a more direct way, not just through the milieu of silence. They were not given emotional and psychological support when they needed it. These forms of neglect constitute mistreatment in current public health literature.

Page 27 line 18-21

"The fact most of the women felt culturally uncomfortable...added to the silence." Did any patient interviews support this view or was this only the opinion of the providers?

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

Yes

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.

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