Reviewer’s report

Title: Universal cervical cancer control through a right to health lens: Refocusing national policy and programmes on underserved women

Version: 0 Date: 29 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Katherine B. Roland

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for submitting this manuscript, you outline an innovative approach to address an intractable problem - incidence and mortality of a preventable disease that has serious economic and social implications for women and communities globally.

Comments:
This article is categorized as a "debate" manuscript, and it seems there is some flexibility in how information is presented across the background/discussion and conclusion sections. Because the purpose of the sections are not clearly distinguished (as they are in a standard research manuscript-background, methods, results and discussion), I found it was difficult to track your argument clearly. I have some suggestions to reordering sections of text and some of the headings, suggestions I think would make the article easier to digest and your argument more cogent. Basically, I think the Discussion subsections need to be reordered to align with the stated objectives, and the conclusion section needs elaboration of public health programmatic impact. There are no page numbers, so my I begin numbering the pages with the "background" section as page 1.

You clearly state the objectives of the paper in the first paragraph of page 2 of the "background" section. First, you examine obligations towards human rights framework for cervical cancer programming and the need address disparities. The second objective is the recommendation that acknowledging SES disparities, governments should adopt and enhance universal or population based NCSPs that reach all eligible women. The third objective is to advocate for governments to adopt new technologies to overcome individual and structural barriers to screening women. I would propose these changes to address those concerns:
1. I would begin the discussion section after the paragraph where you outline the objectives (first paragraph, page 2). The "Discussion" header should be moved to begin with 2nd paragraph on page 2, right before the "vaccination and screening" subheader.
2. I would move the "vaccination and screening" section to page 6 so that it comes directly before the "modern screening methods to overcome disparities" section, and merge the two sections because they are of similar content. (So the revised discussion section will be ordered: 1) the right to sexual and reproductive health (aligns with Objective 1), 2) screening that reaches every woman (aligns with Objective 2 and addresses individual and structural barriers, and 3) vaccination and screening + modern screening methods to overcome disparities (aligns with Objective 3).
Other recommendations:
3. Please clarify whether this paper is targeted to LMICs, or all countries with disparities in cervical cancer mortality and incidence.
4. You state in the first paragraph that prevention and early detection is reliant on a functioning health system, trained providers, lab infrastructure, and vaccination and screening. The article lacks a discussion about how LMICs can develop the infrastructure upon which a NCSP is built if it does not exist, or whether all LMICs have NCSPs. More information regarding how LMICs have addressed disparities, actionable steps and practical guidance for the implementation of these recommendations would be very useful. The conclusion section alludes to recommendations (community health workers, mobile vans) which should be outlined in more depth.
5. Please provide a reference for the first sentence of the second paragraph of the background section, re government responsibility for women across 3 points of her life. Is this the opinion of the author?
6. It is unclear whether there are any NCSPs currently based on human rights law. Is this a novel concept being proposed? Please state if these programs exist. If they do not, state that as well.
7. The term "sexual debut" is anachronistic. It implies a kind of "coming out" or sexual induction, and does not account for girls/females who are engaged in sexual activity/intercourse without consent. For the purposes of the argument of timing of HPV vaccination, it is acceptable to simply state "….women who are vaccinated before sexual activity will benefit most from HPV vaccination, not women who are already sexually active". Please make this adjustment in the first paragraph of the "vaccination and screening" paragraph.
8. I would delete the 2 sentences that begin "The remainder of this subsection will describe the most common....." found in the middle of the "vaccination and screening" section. It is a distraction and unnecessary.

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

Unable to assess

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

Unable to assess

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:
Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal