Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Girl child marriage, socioeconomic status, and undernutrition: Evidence from 35 countries in sub-Saharan Africa

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 07 Mar 2018

**Reviewer:** Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli

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- Page 3, line 23, when describing prevalence trends, indicates "improvements" in 1980 to 1995 in malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa but this not specific enough. Were these slight improvements? Substantial improvements?
- Page 29, line 29, repeated word "in"
- Methods section does not include details on the statistical program used to conduct the analyse
- In the statistical analyses section, it needs to be clearer that the selection of mediators was informed by a literature review, etc. Authors note that as a first step, associations between child marriage and the most likely mediators to undernutrition was conducted. But what was the strategy to identify the "most likely" mediators? This is an important part of the study methodology.
- Indicate to reader if "35" countries in sub-Saharan Africa are all countries in this region.
- Figure 1 - "Original conceptual model"
  - In what ways is this conceptual model different for girls who are not married? $
  - This conceptual model is titled "original conceptual model" but the paper does not present a new model anywhere in the paper, so "original" is misleading here.
  - This model is only referred to in the background, and it would be useful for authors to refer to it and discuss it further in the discussion section of paper.
- In line 22, a primary reference on international Human Rights guidelines should be used, reference 24 is a secondary source.
- In line 30-31, identify the country where girl child marriage was significant and negatively associated with being severely underweight.
- Reference 13 has an asterisk without an explanation as to what this symbol denotes here
- Towards the end of the discussion section, when authors, suggest areas for further research, the suggestions fall flat. In what other contexts would a study investigating this association be particularly valuable? Is there value potential

Overall, The topic of girl child marriage and its relationship to undernutrition is relevant and significant, and this analyses will make a very important contribution to research in this field. The rationale for the study of this topic, and the focus on countries is sub-Saharan Africa is very well-articulated. The paper is well-organized. After correcting the minor issues, I recommend this manuscript for publication.
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.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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