Reviewer’s report

Title: Collecting verbal autopsies: improving and streamlining data collection processes using electronic tablets

Version: 0 Date: 25 Aug 2017

Reviewer: Philip Setel

Reviewer's report:

This paper compares head-to-head the costs of paper-based versus tablet-based data collection for verbal autopsies in the context of scaled programs of mortality surveillance. It is largely a confirmation of the results of such comparisons previously published in the context of survey research application digital data collection.

While not of great scientific value, the article is a very useful contribution to the literature for those seeking to implement verbal autopsy as part of mortality surveillance work at scale. I do suggest one minor revision if the data are available. Namely, the costs of preparing large numbers of tablets for field use (installation of ODK questionnaires and software to transmit VA data) are not factored in. This cost should be mentioned somewhere even if the authors didn't measure it at the time and it can't be included in the cost calculations and comparison. There are a number of typos including in the Abstract that need fixing so a careful proofing before final submission is needed. Otherwise, I recommend the paper for publication.

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