Reviewer’s report

Title: Assessment of respectful and non-abusive care during facility based childbirth in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: a case from Saint Paul’s Hospital Millennium Medical College (SPHMMC) and three Catchment Health Centers

Version: 1 Date: 24 August 2014

Reviewer: Caroline Homer

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper. The paper describes a study on disrespect and abuse in a hospital and health centres in Ethiopia. This is a very important study for a number of reasons. Firstly, it highlights the importance of this issue especially in dissuading women from seeking skilled care. Secondly, this study shows that disrespect and abuse can be measured quantitatively using a recognised framework. Thirdly, it highlights that women do not necessarily understand the terms disrespect and abuse and there specific behaviours must be described.

There are a number of problems with the study as it current standards. Once these are addressed I recommend publication.

The authors use the acronym D&A throughout the paper. I recommend writing the words out fully – they are not too long. This issue is too important to just be an abbreviation and it also means that the magnitude of the issue tends to be lost. The three words are not too cumbersome.

Some of the phrases and syntax in the writing need attention. For example, ‘mothers who have passed through assisted or non-assisted vaginal delivery’ could be ‘Women who had given birth vaginally’.

I prefer using ‘to give birth’ rather than deliver as it is more empowering of women. That is the same for ‘birth’ rather than ‘delivery’ throughout.

Woman centred care is singular (not women centred care) as that is the whole point – can that is focussed on an individual woman. ‘On the other hand’ at the top of page 10 is out of place and not needed. On page 11 – ‘leaving women on labour’ should be ‘leaving women in labour’.

The lack of support in labour from a companion of the woman’s choice is highlighted as something that is not permitted in Ethiopia. This needs urgent attention and this paper could highlight that denying women this attention is not only contributing to disrespect and abuse it is also against evidence-based practice. Support in labour from a companion has been shown in many studies to be advantageous and we need studies like this to argue for it.

I assume the 4 female data collectors who not involved in the women’s care? If
this is so, please state this in the methods.

In the sentence at the top of page 11 about the consent issues – the two %’s could be the same women? I Think it is important to explain that the items are not mutually exclusive – that is, women are only in one category.

I am unclear with the statement on page 12 that 95% of women did not have their right to information or consent protected. Is this correct as it is not reflected in the table or in the results?

Why did the women who had experienced disrespect and abuse before return to the health facility to give birth. Your study cannot tell you that but it is an interesting issue to consider.

The new Lancet Series on Midwifery has a number of papers on this issue and it would be useful to refer to it. In particular the paper by Renfrew et al is important:


Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'