Reviewer’s report

Title: Social capital and health during pregnancy; an in-depth exploration from rural Sri Lanka

Version: 0 Date: 10 Jan 2017

Reviewer: famida Taleb

Reviewer's report:

Comments from reviewer:

General:

1. The line numbers are not consistent with the sentences. It was not easy to refer from the line numbers.

2. Plagiarism is present in at least three instances. Please, rephrase them as this is considered as a very bad practice.

3. Please, narrate in the Methods: If this study is a part of a big study, write which section you are presenting in this article and state the name of the big study (If it has any), stakeholders/ partners of the study, is there any competing conflict of interest among partners of the study and so on.

4. The methodology section needs to be precise and clean. It needs a lot of narrations and organized presentation of data collection tools and techniques.

5. The in-text references are sometimes written before a full-stop, sometimes after that, such as, page 6, line 7. The authors should be careful in this respect.

Comments:

Page 1:
Methods in Abstract: Please, write what kind of qualitative research is this. It seems from the title that this is an exploratory research conducted using qualitative method.

Result section in abstract: Please, add the sample size in 'Methods'. Please, write with whom the key informant interviews were conducted.
Please, write the names of four different pathways.

Page 3:

line 1-6: Please, add the sample size in 'Methods'.

Line 5: Please, write with whom the key informant interviews were conducted.

Line 20: Please, write the names of four different pathways.

Page 4:

Introduction:

Line 19: This sentence has high level of matching with source. Please, rephrase this sentence.

Line 20-27: This is plagiarized. Please, rephrase.

Page 5:

General:

Please, link all the paragraphs with the aim of the study. All of them are carrying important information, but they seem to lack connections.

Line 15-17: Please, link the last line of the paragraph with the rest of the paragraph. It brings questions like, decreased smoking -by whom? Is it only the partner? the family members or the pregnant women herself? or is that some promotion (as this article talks about social support) that reduces the habit of smoking? Same is for the use of prenatal vitamins- provided by whom? is that related to financial support? How this is related to pregnancy health?

Line 30-32: This is plagiarized. Please, rephrase.

Page 6:

General comments for methodology:

Please, add a section on narrating diaries, diary interviews and in-depth interviews and Key informant interviews. Would you please tell if the diary interviews are the in-depth interviews? Kindly add details on:
* the number of study participants for each category,

* if there was any case you couldn't follow up (such as, 41 diaries but 38 IDIs),

* the reasons for participants declining from the study,

* total study period,

* duration of participant recruitment,

* after which period IDIs were taken,

* how long were they, were all of them tape recorded, were they agreed for the interview to be recorded?

* detail information on informed consent- written or verbal, process of taking consent, (Though it is present in the "declaration", it should also be in the methodology.)

* Eligibility criteria of the participants (eg. age, ethnicity, years of residing in that area, marital years, level of education, or anything else?)

Methods, Line 30-33: If this study is a part of a big study, write result from which section you are presenting in this article and state the name of the big study (If it has any), stakeholders/partners of the study, is there any competing conflict of interest among partners of the study and so on.

Line 39: Please, write what kind of qualitative study is this. It seems from the title that this is an exploratory study.

Page 7:

line 1-2: Are the mothers registered in both public and private facilities?

Line 5-6: Would you please provide updated data? This information is ten years old.
Selecting communities:

Have the researchers started to work in all the communities simultaneously?

How working in eight communities was managed? How many members were in the research team?

Are there several ethnic communities? In such situation, how barriers were faced, as for example: language, different cultural context?

Line 27: Please, explain 'ancient village'.

Page 8:

Line 1-2: How data saturation was estimated? Were analysis of data and participant recruitment going simultaneously?

Phase 1. Participants diaries:

Line 15-20: Please, explain 'available guidelines'. Which guidelines were used? Who developed and pretested this diaries? Action of pretesting of diaries has been stated in this article. Would you please provide a brief on the format of the diary? - is that the normal diaries we use in our regular life for personal documentation or something different with some clues for the study participants to provide information for a study?

Phase 2:

Line 26-27: It would look good if you add a subtitle here as you did for phase 1. It is better to be consistent all over the article.

Line 28-30: Please, add the number of interviews with community workers and health providers. Have you developed any guide to have the IDIs with pregnant women (in line 46-50)? It yes, you should add that here also.
Data collection procedures

Please, write the themes you asked about in IDIs. How did you derive information from the diaries to ask questions, was there a mechanism? When the interview took place- was there any rule for that? Is that after she finished writing for two weeks (every day?) or during this two weeks? How long was that? Is that using telephone or face to face? If it is face to face, where it was conducted- at home? or hospital or any other places? Was the interviewer a female or a male with enough training?

Line 41-44: Were the participants given any phone number/contact address at the time of recruitment so that they can call in time of need for assistance during writing diaries? It seems that there was one-way communication from the researchers that questions the validity/accuracy of data from diaries.

Line 51-54: Though highly educated, were the interviewers well-trained to interview women who are pregnant and may emotionally vulnerable? It seems like they were trained on only qualitative methods. Please, add more on if they were trained on qualitative data collection using qualitative methods, understanding research ethics, respecting the traditional practices of different communities and especially on talking to women who are physical and emotionally vulnerable.

Line 59-60: Please, elaborate the areas where you followed FHI guidelines, such as, steps in taking interviews, training of the RAs and so on.

Page 9:

Line 1-7: It seems from this paragraph that only diaries and interview notes were translated. Have you translated the verbatim transcriptions of IDIs and KII?

Data Analysis

Line 12: Please, rephrase this sentence. It would be better if you state that you followed Framework approach for qualitative data analysis.

Line 56-60: These sentences should be stated previously with more details.
Respondent validation

Line 22-32: As this study depends on information provided by respondents in their diaries, there can be under reporting or over reporting. How the researchers planned to control this?

Page 11:

Line 49-57: Please, remove these lines and add them in the methods section. Only findings should be written in the result section.

Page 13:

Line 47: Please, do not start a sentence with 'But'. There are similar mistakes in several places in this article. Kindly, make corrections.

Line 52-56: It seems that talking over phone when husband or family are away being considered as a means of maintaining social relationships. Would it be possible to explore why the women talks over phone when they are alone/ husband/family is away? And how is it related to improve social capital?

Page 14:

Line 33-39: It seems like, being with friend and relatives makes the pregnant women self-confident.

Line 50-51: Have the participants stated about their husbands even when they have conflict with their in-laws?

Page 15

Would it be possible to see if the marital years have any influence in Domestic Cohesion (If data is available)?

Page 17:

Line 12: Would it be possible to explore from the study that if the pregnant women feel insecure when they are alone because of anticipating adverse events, such as, sudden abdominal pain,
abortion, falling from higher place or anything bad that can happen to the child, any superstitions and so on?

Social support to enhance both physical and mental wellbeing

Line 16: Please, remove the space before 'Most'.

Page 18:

Line 19-25: Please, indicate if possible, what kind of person is considered as 'closest'- someone from parent's home, in-laws home, friend?

Line 41: Please, explain the nature of 'contact'. Is that daily, monthly, 24/7?

Page 20

Line 34: Have the Participant stated VOG or any other word? It seems like a technical one.

Discussion:

Would it be possible to see potential linkage between "families of pregnant women and the health service" and "community and the health services" from the data available which will provide insight into social capital in a group.

**Level of interest**
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited
Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

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