Reviewer’s report

Title: Obstetric fistulae in Southern Mozambique: Incidence, obstetric characteristics and treatment

Version: 0 Date: 22 Aug 2017

Reviewer: Cheru Tesema

Reviewer's report:

Manuscript Title

Obstetric fistulae in Southern Mozambique: Incidence, obstetric characteristics and Treatment

Manuscript number: REPH-D-17-00231

Overview: the topic of this article is very important issue and incorporates a very critical issue but I am in doubt whether this is research or report. The authors did not use any statistical analysis to analyze the data. Therefore, I did not see the relevant of this paper. It is better to publish it as a case report rather than research.

Abstract: it does adequately summarize the methods and key findings of the research. However, on the methodology part the authors did not explain about how they select the study participants as well as what type of softwares used to analysis the data

Background: In this section, the authors should describe about the magnitude of obstetric fistula in worldwide, and the magnitude of obstetric fistula in developing countries as well as in Mozambique. Moreover, what interventions have been done to alleviate the existing problem? What was the outcome of the intervention? What is the gap still not addressed by the implemented strategies? Generally, the paper needs extensive grammatical edition thought-out the document.

Methods: the authors mentioned about the sample size calculation, but they did not show us anything how they calculated it. In addition, the authors did not report anything about the quality assurance of the data. Similarly, the authors did not talk about either the training was given to the data collectors or not. On the analysis part, they the authors used R software but they did not assess any factors which affect the incidence of Fistulae why.

Page 5, line 117, on method, the authors said that they interviewed recently delivered women. What does recent mean? If it includes immediately after delivery, the complication might be due
to other cause which may result during Labour cell contraction. And also, how did you relate pre-eclampsia with obstetric fistula?

What type of intervention was taken for women confirmed with fistula

Results: in this section, the researchers reported about the characteristics of five cases with detail description as a result this is a case report rather than research finding. Therefore, for researchers I recommended to do reanalysis to see the determinants of fistulae among these women's otherwise this finding is simply reporting the number of cases. As a result, this might have no any implication for implementation. As observed on page 10, line 216, table 1, Characteristics 216 of the mothers with obstetric fistula, women found in the reproductive age group, that means 15-49, but nothing has been said on the ethical issues of women age less than 18 years old in the method sections. Therefore, how did you managed the ethical issues of these women, since they did not give consent for their self??

Discussion: this section of the research did not give any meaning to the finding. The authors simply put the result but they should interpret the result and compare this finding with other previous research output studied either in the country or other countries, WHO or country guideline. Moreover, they should come up with possible justifications. Their finding has no possible justification for the discrepancy. The discussion is really weak and does not explain the importance of the study as well. The study also collects data which will be expressed using narrating qualitatively. But, there is no information stated as corrected said by the respondents. Where is cot, individual response?

Conclusion: this section is relatively good and stated well. But, what is your base or reference to say the incidence of obstetric fistulae in an area with high facility births? Where is your operational definitions incorporated at the method section? What was the normal or standard and also the cut-off point to say high or low? And also the authors stated that the quality of care as cause/concern for high incidence of obstetric fistulae. But, how did they know the quality of care since they did not assess it?

Page 10, line 216, table 1: Incomplete title. A title of a table must answer at least three basic questions of the reader. But, this table title did not fulfil the required one.

On the same page, 10, table. The value or figure of each variable described in the table contains only frequency. But, rather more illustrative is describe percentage together with frequency.

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

An article of limited interest
Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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