Reviewer’s report

Title: Qualitative Evaluation of the Saleema Campaign to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting in Sudan

Version: 0 Date: 09 Dec 2017

Reviewer: Angela Dawson

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to learn more about this important program in Sudan. I think the paper would greatly benefit from the addition of contextual and theoretic information. I hope these comments are useful.

Abstract

Need for clarity of expression i.e. Line 15 should read

"The Saleema campaign evaluation involved gathering data from four focus group discussion from each of the 18 states in Sudan"

Sentence beginning "codes were.." at line 19 not clear. The first sentence of the results is also unclear.

Background

Page 4 Line 38 should read "change" not "changing"

While health communication is important on its own it will not change behaviour. Berg et al have noted the focus on the dissemination of health information in FGM programs while those interventions that demonstrate promising outcomes are those involving an integrated approach.


It would be good if the authors could discuss the contribution of the findings of this evaluation in relation to the FGM literature and what it contributes or adds to our understanding of communicating to change social norms relating to FGM

Page 4 line 40 Social norms cannot be decreased but changed - see also in abstract
As I understand it, health branding is not a theory rather a tool. Health branding is related to social marketing which is underpinned by behavioural theory. What is the theory that underpins the Saleema campaign? How did this theory affect the campaign design and message framing and choice of channel to communicate? How were these decision made and testing undertaken to ensure the materials were robust enough to roll out?

Can the authors please explain what an "interim evaluation" is and how this fits with say process and outcome evaluation. Is this part of a formative or is it a post implementation review?

What is the time frame of this health communication campaign? What was the campaign objectives, what messages did it aim to communicate? It would be good to discuss the branding of the images and messages in more detail here than in the findings. How does this evaluation relate to other aspects of the larger Saleema evaluation? Is there other data that these results can be compared or understood in relation too?

Methods

What is the methodological orientation of this study? The authors state that Grounded theory directed their coding approach. This requires elaboration. I think the authors drew upon some of the analysis processes used in Grounded theory but have undertaken a descriptive qualitative study.

Page 5 Line 30 PAU needs explanation, why random sampling?

Why were focus groups chosen?

How were participants recruited?

Was ethics and consent from participants obtained?

I suggest the authors look to Tong et. al. to assist with reporting these methods more fully.


The description of the analysis is confusing and lacking in detail. There are two tables relating to this that the authors do not describe in the manuscript. I suggest that the authors provide some examples of how they coded text inductively and the framework that this was compared with to finalize decisions. Not satisfactory to quote Creswell and Patton and state that "This type of qualitative analysis technique has been utilized in various disciplines". There are many approaches to qualitative data analysis.
How did the messaging on the posters relate to other messaging on radio, etc? I am not clear if the authors are evaluating the poster or the images portrayed in the posters that are representative of the campaign itself?

Can the authors provide some example of the questions asked and explain how these related to the 4 "ps" and "brand equity?"

Findings

What are the characteristics of the participant? Age ethnicity marital status etc?

Quotes more than 3 lines should be separated from the text and indented.

With reference to "information and sources" This seems to refer to information generally not information about FGM. I am not clear why this information was required - surely this would have been part of the baseline data that informed what channels to communicate the FGM related messaging. Print materials seem to be the least common source however this paper refers to the use of a poster to stimulate discussion.? Why did the researchers select this and not say an example from the internet/ TV or sound bite from the radio?

Very interesting findings on page 10

Discussion

There is no discussion of the findings in relation to the literature or other aspects of the evaluation. What insights do these findings provide for other contexts and how they be translated into policy and practice?

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