Reviewer’s report

Title: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE DURING PREGNANCY AND ADVERSE BIRTH OUTCOMES : A CASE CONTROL STUDY

Version: 0 Date: 20 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Martín Di Marco

Reviewer’s report:

Regarding the originality of the manuscript, the submitted paper shows remarkable resembles with papers already published. Sentences, numbers, grammatical expressions are far too similar to consider this resemblance a coincidence. If these papers were used as models or comparative studies, a clear comment or statement must be made. From Ethiopia, two papers were found (a. Laelago, T., Belachew, T., & Tamrat, M. (2017). Effect of intimate partner violence on birth outcomes. African health sciences, 17(3), 681-689. b. Demelash, H., Nigatu, D., & Gashaw, K. (2015). A Case-Control Study on Intimate Partner Violence during Pregnancy and Low Birth Weight, Southeast Ethiopia. Obstetrics and gynecology international, 2015, 394875), from other countries two other papers were found (a. Geoffrey Nimrod Sigalla, Declare Mushi, Dan Wolf Meyrowitsch, Rachel Manongi, Jane Januarius Rogathi, Tine Gammeltoft, Vibeke Rasch. Intimate partner violence during pregnancy and its association with preterm birth and low birth weight in Tanzania: A prospective cohort study. b. Thanh Nguyen Hoang, Toan Ngo Van, Tine Gammeltoft, Dan W. Meyrowitsch, Hanh Nguyen Thi Thuy, Vibeke Rasch. Association between Intimate Partner Violence during Pregnancy and Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes in Vietnam: A Prospective Cohort Study).

Regarding the writing quality of the paper, several major aspects should be addressed. On the one hand, there are several typos scattered throughout the text:

- Title: Extra space in title, before colon
- P. 13. L. 36 (and other times): "ComprehensiveSpecialized"
- Space after colon in abstract
- P. 3 L. 23 "wasconducted"
- P. 3 L. 24 "318 Cases" (without capital letter)
- P. 2 L. 24 "a" total of… (a missing)
- P. 2 L. 24: "Systematic sampling will be used to select the cases and controls". Should be in past tense.
Several spaces are missing, for instance: "Result: out of 954 interviewed mothers, 389 (40.8\%)"

P. 2 L. 37: "to experience Low" (no capital letter is needed)

P. 7: "Ethical clearance was obtained from Institution Review Board (IRB) of Aksum University, College of Health Science. Official permission was obtained from Tigray regional health bureau for respective hospitals. In addition, the ethical considerations were done by taking into account the personal and revealing nature of the study, which required that voluntary, informed consent, using the consent form designed for this study, needed to be obtained from the participants. Prior to administering the questionnaires, the objectives of the study were clearly explained to the participants and verbal consent was obtained. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the execution of the study"

On the other hand, other aspects regarding English grammar must be reviewed:

- In general terms, the use of lack of use of spaces, colon, capital letters, and position of the percentage symbol (%) must be checked.

- P. 3 L. 7-8: "Ethiopian families"

- Domestic violence is the most far-reaching and prevalent. This sentence is grammatically incorrect: is the most far-reaching and prevalent phenomenon, health-related issue, etc.?

- "showed that, women exposed" no comma is needed.

- "Conclusion: Overall and physical violence during pregnancy was associated" the "and" should not be in the sentence

- P. 5 L. 11 Human Rights should be spelled with capital letter in the initials

- P. 5 L. 25 "phenomenon in Ethiopia both urban and rural families" should read "both IN urban and rural families. This is a crucial sentence.

- P. 7 L. 4: "Multi variable analysis" should read "multi-variable analysis"

- P. 8 L. 10-12: "In this study, a total of 318 women's who had adverse birth outcome (cases) and 636 women's who had normal birth outcome (controls) were". Should read outcomes in plural.
"violence at home 'domestic violence' is considered". Grammatical mistake.

"More than half, 218(68.6%) cases and one fourth 171(26.9%) of controls reported experiencing some form of IPV during the index pregnancy, 57.5%(183) cases and 51(8.0%) of controls reported experiencing some act of physical violence during their index pregnancy and one third of cases 103(32.4%) and 26(4.1%) of controls reported being slapped by their intimate partner as the most common type of physical violence during pregnancy." Review grammar.

The data collection instrument has major English mistakes that must be mended: "How many deliveries do you have?" must read "How many deliveries have you had?" etc.

* OTHER COMMENTS

"About 30-60%". This range is far too big to express an estimation.

"Regarding to marital status, 276(86.8%) cases and 554(87.1%) of controls were married. Two hundred nine (65.7%) of cases and 367(57.7)". Use numbers.

When categorizing the variable "religion", one of the options is "orthodox": to which religion does it relate? All religions can be described in some groups as orthodox.

Overall the paper present descriptive results of the phenomenon. Although, several aspects could be developed further, such as a stratification of the population. Is the association equally present in different economic sectores, or religious groups? As this information was gathered in the instrument, it would be relevant to include in the analysis.

Index pregnancy period is not defined and should be, as it is a crucial concept.

"Result:out of 954interviewed mothers,389(40.8%) had experienced intimate partner violence during their index pregnancy period. More than two third (68.6%) of cases had been exposed to intimate partner violence." These two sentences are not clear enough: which is the difference between both percentages? Clarify.
P. 5. L. 15: "pervasive form". That adjective just refers to a moral judgment of the practice of domestic violence. I suggest to avoid moral language, despite the fact it is in fact negative and deleterious for the wellbeing of women.

P. 8. L. 56: "enter method" develop.

The tables at the end of the paper show a vast range of measured variables. However, most of them are not analyzed in the paper. I suggest that only the analyzed data is included as appendixes. Furthermore, crucial socio-demographic variables might have insightful information of the analysis, such as monthly income.

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:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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