Reviewer’s report

Title: The experience of men who participated in interventions to improve demand for and utilization of maternal and child health services in northern Nigeria: a qualitative comparative study

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Reviewer: Sumankuuro Joshua

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Title: The experience of men who participated in interventions to improve demand for and utilization of maternal and child health services in northern Nigeria: a qualitative comparative study

This paper contributes to a large and growing literature on barriers to accessing maternal and child health services in low and middle-income countries like Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African countries, mostly in the form of women's autonomy. The manuscript reflects a great deal of work on, and the intervention group reported, and it's worthy of publication. The quotes are human stories presented in the paper which serve to highlight the success of the MNCH2 and other challenges that need to be explored. I also suggest the authors reorganise the manuscript to flow sequentially.

While the authors present relevant information, there are a few observations to improve clarity.

Introduction

On page 5 line 9. '3%' will be better placed after 'figures.'

Page 6 line 3: Clearly indicate the number of meetings held, e.g. 2 to 3 times a week, ....

Page 6 line 52-53: the sentence can be reordered as "key messages emphasised the need for men to approve their wives and children's utilisation of health services ...."

The sentence on page 6 line 4 onwards i.e. by the time fieldwork started for this study, however, the intervention continues to expand..... is incomplete or needs rewording.

Page 5 line 17: the paragraph starting with .... The Nigeria Maternal Newborn and Child Health Programme (MNCH2) .... Should be moved to the methods section and given a sub-heading, as this isn't part of the literature review.....
Alternatively, portions of the section can be placed in the appropriate sub-sections of the methods to avoid repetition.

Methods

Page 7 line 50: reproductive age should be specified, and appropriate reference provided. I have realised that in earlier portions, the authors indicated that men who were married to a woman within the ages of 15-35 years were eligible to participate while you are reporting on a project that educated men on several relevant topics of MNCH, with an implicit aim of reducing maternal and child mortalities.

Did the authors consider the risks associated with childbearing at aged 15 or 16 years? Were there messages against child marriage because such girls may be denied formal education?

Page 6 line 55 - 56: In all how many participated in the study? This should be clearly stated.

Page 6 line 41-43, the authors stated that there were over 12,655 known communities reached by the MNCH2 interventions, how did you arrive at just 12 communities?

I understand you used purposive sampling procedure, however, can you explain to readers the primary considerations in choosing the 12 communities? e.g. Proximity and cost collecting data, …

Results

Page 7, line 21, the 112 men are just mentioned for the first time in this section. Can you mention it in the methods section as well..

Page 8 line 21 and line 28: did you collect demographic data, which were used to determine the means for participants and number of living children? Consider deleting "mean number of living children was 4.7 …..", Because it contradicts the method used and the research instruments described? Otherwise, you will have to add your dataset and instruments as supplemental files.

Page 7 line 55-56: change "though" to "through".

Page 9 line "feelings" should be replaced with a more appropriate word.

Page 9 line 51 …. "transportation difficulties in arriving to meetings"….. can be changed to "transportation difficulties in attending meetings" …

P11 line 9: …. "danger signs to the woman in pregnancy, labour, and delivery" …. can be changed to danger signs of pregnancy, labour and delivery" …. as these pertain to only women.
Page 11 line 17: …… "to this series of questions, by FGD" …… can be changed to "to the questions."

P11: the last sentence on page 11 needs to be improved for clarity.

Page 12; In the table, "danger signs to newborn first week". The "first week" should be in brackets.

P14 line 9: Check "thanks"

P14 line 29: Delete "young".

P15 line 34 Change "she inherits" to "she inherited".

P16 line 26: delete "s" in "mores"

P16 line 55: Sentence needs rewording to include both intervention and non-intervention groups' participants in the study.

Discussion

Your discussion is rather too brief, but the overall message advocates for increased male involvement in maternal and child health service utilisation in rural and less urbanised settings, and should be published.

Level of interest

Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English

Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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