Reviewer’s report

Title: Women with infertility complying with and resisting polygyny: an explorative qualitative study in urban Gambia

Version: 0 Date: 08 Apr 2019

Reviewer: Yared Abera

Reviewer's report:

Name of the reviewer: Yared Abera (MD, MPH)

Title of the Manuscript: Women with infertility complying with and resisting polygyny: an explorative qualitative study in urban Gambia

Summary of the review:

General:

It is an interesting mix of study for 'Reproductive Health Journal' focusing on gender aspect of RH. The Authors have reviewed several similar studies conducted in Africa and in Gambia, and gave us additional in the methodology section on the magnitude of polygyny in Gambia. Characteristically, the older the women and less educated and economically not liberated, it is likely that they would be in polygyny marriage.

The study is good and has tried to show us the various experience of an infertile woman in patriarchal and religious society where polygyny is a norm. This does not mean it has given us a very different information different what we knew. Referring to the references, similar studies referenced date back to the 90's. After nearly three decades these women are facing the same gender based violence, no clear infertility health-care despite the high unmet need for. This may be a good reminder to policy makers to see the mental health aspect of and unmet reproductive health need for infertility in Gambian rural and semi urban areas.

Editorial - Line 107 - change 'scholarship' to 'Scholars'

Line 427- delete one of the 'as part'
Methodology:

Study area well explained with information that was missed in the introduction/background section. Qualitative design is often good to elicit such information from participants of the study with similar experience.

* The study described that participants of qualitative study couldn't speak English if English is a language spoken at schools and workplaces...may be they are less educated and economically more dependent on husbands introducing bias into the study, what about those financially well off and their coping mechanism

* The method explained the selection criteria of participants (inclusion criteria)...what was the intention of including in the discussion women who don't have fertility problems

* What is the operational definition of infertility, primary and secondary?

* Did the study included the 27 women in the in depth interview also in the group discussion...explain

* In male and culturally influenced society women may not speak out their home experience related to polygyny in the presence of men. So, the author should clearly show who conducted the interview, here is only the translator's gender described and the well experienced principal investigator (one foreign researcher)

Results

In the methodology section...the men and women who are not fertile were included, but there is nothing in the result section referring this discussant group?

The experience of women with infertility section - anything about the support from husband to deal with the infertility instead of rushing for having another wife - religio-cultural medicine, medical support?

Decision making section - anything on who decide for the infertile woman at time when to visit witch doctor or health workers?

Coping - Beyond the emotion, the stress these women are facing could be immense to the level of mental breakage leading to mental health problem...but not mentioned?
Discussion

This section discuss the results well. It is good to see that the discussants mentioned the need for infertility health care like any other health problem.

Contrary to the method section, here lines 494-497 included men's experience in polygyny is exclusion as limitation - check?

Conclusion:

Here this section needs a recommendations of further study or quantification of the extent of mental health problems among these segment of population

I like the idea of women empowerment economically - interventions focusing in income generation to target this group of the population

Bring out the best coping mechanisms at household, community and other social structures to support the group

Evidence-based advocacy for mental health and access for infertility health-care

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

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