Reviewer’s report

Title: Midwives’ perspectives on (dis)respectful intrapartum care during facility-based delivery in sub-Saharan Africa: a qualitative systematic review and meta-synthesis

Version: 0 Date: 23 Apr 2019

Reviewer: Susan Munabi-Babigumira

Reviewer's report:

This is a well conducted synthesis, is well written, and draws attention to an important issue. Below are a few comments I wish to make:

1) Participants were identified as midwives, nurse-midwives or midwifery students. It may be useful to include a definition of 'midwife', or describe the qualifications of the midwives (in results) since there is wide variation in midwifery qualifications in sub-Saharan Africa.

2) Page 9, Data extraction and synthesis: More information on the data extraction process may be useful eg was data extracted by one reviewer, was there any peer checking of extracted data?

3) Page 10, Line 53 - 56: Clarify which reviewers

4) Page 11, Line 13: Please correct the denominator: (25/45) not (25/35)

5) Table 3, Characteristics of included studies. Study number 11, Warren et al 2015. 33 auxiliary midwives were included - were these certified midwives? Probably not, even though they were based at a facility (Reference to point i made in comment number 1 above). In addition, the paper indicates the auxiliary midwives were based at self standing maternity units in rural areas, 2 were based in urban facilities. This was the setting in which they worked. I suggest you delete the ‘continuing education session at a regional referral hospital - this is where the participants were sampled from.

6) Page 12, Line 12-13: In the text that summarises the results in relation to the framework, there is no mention of the other meso-level themes (Medicalisation of birth, Gender inequality/status of women, Poverty and inequality). Were there no findings that covered these themes?

7) Page 12, Line 13: You state 'An emerging theme outlined the impact on midwives of (dis)respectful care. Does this belong at the Meso-level (as implied in the introductory text to the results), or is it a cross cutting issue arising from several levels.

8) Page 12, Line 17-18: Use Heading font for 'Power and Control’
9) Page 15, line 55-56: Intersecting with controlling women was the perception that 'certain categories' were more difficult to control - can you include some examples of the categories of women referred to in this statement?

10) Page 16, line 8: In Ghana, some students justified physical abuse of women if they had done something wrong - can you include an example of 'wrong doing' that would lead to physical abuse?

11) Page 16, line 43: Use heading font for 'Maintaining midwives status'

12) Page 18, line 15: It maybe useful to add a heading before 'Work environment/Resources' to indicate these are 'Meso-level' factors. (Consider adding Micro-Level heading at the beginning of the results).

13) Page 20, line 48: 'Midwives conceptualisations of RMC' - A sentence at the start of the paragraph that indicates that this is nested under Midwifery training/history, may be useful to the Reader to know this finding is still related to the conceptual framework.

14) Page 21, line 46: For consistency, use Adolphson et al [35]

15) Page 22, Impact on Midwives - It may be useful to indicate either using a New Title, or a sentence at the start of the paragraph to indicate that this was a New or additional or crosscutting theme.

16) Page 23, Line 17-18, Discussion. (and sometimes facility guidelines) - This is not mentioned anywhere in the results section.

17) Page 24, Paragraph from line 8 to page 25 line 1. This is a very long paragraph, that could be easier read if split into smaller paragraphs eg one focusing on social distancing, another paragraph on 'midwives focus on their own insecure and ambiguous position in the Health system hierarchy.

18) Page 25, Line 51 - Page 26 line 8. Much of this information seems to cover the findings (though some of the these macro-level issues eg Colonial Legacy, structural inequality eg gender-based violence, are not reflected in the results section) and could be better placed within the main discussion of findings and not methodological considerations/limitations.

19) Page 26, line 13 - 16. You may want to add that that the studies explored views of midwives across a range of geographies, cadre, and Levels of care,...but insufficient data to explore influence of rurality, or Level of qualification or 'Level of institution.

20) The Authors may consider adding their own 'Reflexivity' paragraph.
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I declare that I have a non Financial competing interest - I am an Author of another complementary review that focusses on Factors that influence the provision of intrapartum and postnatal care by skilled birth attendants in Low and Middle Income countries.

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