Reviewer’s report

Title: Hospital detention of mothers and their infants at a large provincial hospital: a mixed-methods descriptive case study, Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Version: 0 Date: 20 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Timothy Abuya

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General comments

The paper is interesting and digs into issues of detention that demean child birth. The authors have attempted to provide a description of issues with some form of depth. However, the paper could be cut down significantly if some of the issues are more focused and presented in far fewer words.

The title could also be cut down to a fewer words and for example should not have the year on it. There are a few language issues that could be improved for clarity. Examples include the abstract, page 5 line 93,

Conceptual issues for consideration

1. Although the authors do trace the history of D&A from Bowser and Hill framework, perhaps they could consider a more recent paper by Bohren 2015 to help them define the issue of detention better. I like that they have framed within the human rights agenda but to be more recent work by Bohren and Freedman helps refine this work further.

2. I do like that they situate the work in two broad contexts- inequality and D&A context. However when doing discussions, it might be useful to refocus the reader to what drives the practices and how they interrelate.

3. The authors could also try to highlight what drives these practices in results section and discuss it in detail in the discussions section. For the system level issues such lack of money to ran facilities and the low figures set up by the political establishment makes it hard for facilities to manage clients at that prices. These and other drivers including economic challenges might be worth alluding to as drivers

4. Methods section- the retrospective data is supposed to complement the current study but I think it is difficult for one to link the length of stay with other reasons beyond pay. unless that records indicated reason being lack of funds. This data in my opinion should be underplayed and perhaps used as background to the context rather than data in itself
5. Structure of results- Perhaps the result should not be presented by type of study but could they integrate it by thematic areas and use data from all sources? The authors use terms like more likely which begs one to think that they did logistics regression analyses which is not the case. I guess better language to communicate results would be useful. There were a few discrepancies between facts in the table and text especially on costs of treatment and what they were detained for. The use of rela name of a person the results section should be avoided due to ethical issues.

6. Discussion - should reflect in my opinion three things- what is the level of detention and compare with other contexts (n=88) is small but provides useful insights on what level it might, two what drives it and situate within broader context and three what does it mean to alleviate it and build stronger health system.

7. Finally I think the conclusion is weak and should be linked to purpose of study.

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Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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