Reviewer’s report

Title: Using the Theory of Planned Behavior to Explain Birth in Health Facility Intention among Expecting Couples in a Rural Setting Rukwa Tanzania: A Cross-sectional Survey

Version: 0 Date: 21 Jul 2019

Reviewer: T Nyamhanga

Reviewer's report:

REVIEWERS' COMMENTS

1. Introduction

The introduction is well written. However, there is a gap between problematization of maternal and neonatal mortality and insertion of the Theory of Planned Behavior. That is, description about the theory is abruptly introduced - consequently, there is a gap between lines 111 & 112. It can be improved by adding 2-3 sentences (between the two lines) attributing maternal and neonatal deaths to limited access to skilled birth attendance. When that is done, application of the Theory of Planned Behavior will be deemed relevant before going to its details.

2. Sampling techniques

The authors state that two districts (Sumbawanga Rural District and Kalambo District) were conveniently selected from the four districts of Rukwa Region. However, no reason has been provided. Given the focus of the study - "maternal and neonatal health", the two districts would have been selected purposefully and the criterion being high levels of maternal and/or neonatal mortality.

3. Data processing and analysis:

a) Description about application of Descriptive statistics should be more explicit and mention those statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, etc.

b) Bivariate analysis is missing from the description of data analysis approach. Likewise, there is no description showing transitioning from bivariate to logistic regression.

4. Results:

The results section should be well structured using subheadings. Currently, the only sub-heading is "socio-demographic characteristics".

Authors need to have a sub-heading under which results on attitudes, perceived subjective norms, perceived behavior control towards health facility childbirth intention should appear. Since the study involved pregnant and their spouses, this part of the results presentation may further be reorganized by having separate sub-sections for pregnant women and male spouses.
Minor observation on placement of tables - lack of consistency. Tables 1 & 3 are appearing at the end of the manuscript just before references, while tables 2, 4, & 5 are in the middle.

5. Discussion:

Need to have more discussion of the key finding on male spouses. The study found that of the three domains of intention none was a significant predictor of intention to use health facility for childbirth among male respondents.

The discussion here should be more gender contextualized. That is, the discussion needed to go beyond financial implication. Authors need to discuss how masculine norms may limit male spouses’ preparedness for childbirth.

This gender perspective may also be highlighted in the conclusion section of the paper.

**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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

**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