Reviewer’s report

Title: Determinants of Severe Acute Malnutrition Among Under Five Children In rural Enebsie Sarmidr District, East Gojjam Zone, North West Ethiopia, 2016

Version: 1 Date: 10 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Getahun Ersino

Reviewer's report:

This paper attempts to identify risk factors for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) among young children from a rural district in northwest Ethiopia. I believe it can provide useful information to the local health program planners provided that it is properly written. However, the paper has major issues almost in all of its sections, from introduction to conclusion and references. It reads more like shortened forms of the authors of the manuscript, perhaps due to inexperience, were not able to tell a coherent story supported by relevant literature and data. Introduction is poorly written; the method section vague and poorly written; virtually there is almost nothing in the main text of the result and discussion section. References are either irrelevant (outdated) and/or not properly cited nor properly listed. I have indicated examples of the main issues below.

INTRODUCTION

- Based on the title, the reader is interested to know the issues surrounding SAM in children in Ethiopia and specific region the study occurred. However, the first three paragraphs of the introduction state a number of general statements which are poorly referenced. References should be placed directly after the statement of fact they support and they need to be cited not for the mere opinion they contain but based on their main evidence supported argument they present. Authors need to pay attention to the relevance of each reference they cite since SAM a very time-sensitive type malnutrition--meaning it can change within months’ time when situations improve (for example, authors suggest that mortality rate from SAM is over 20% at present and yet cite a reference from 7 years ago [reference 9 & 10]).

Since the paper is focused on identifying determinants of SAM, the introduction needs to be focused as well. Authors need to a concise background on SAM (or malnutrition) in Ethiopia, Amhara Region and the specific district including trends, prevalence/incidence and associated challenges. Then the authors needs to show the gaps in evidence; clearly state the purpose their research and why it is needed.
METHOD

- The method section, like the intro, needs to be re-written. It doesn't provide any information about the study setting or why it was selected (simply mentions the name of the place). Authors also did not provide justification for their selection of the design (why unmatched case control study? why not matched? why not case to control ratio of 1:2 or 1:3? No proper description of the tools used and no proper reference support; how the main outcome variable was measured? What criteria was used? No clear inclusion and exclusion criteria? No justification for selection of the independent variables, etc.

RESULTS:

- Tables are unnecessarily crowded.
- Main findings and trends in the data are not summarized in the text: There was nothing said about Tables 2-4

DISCUSSION:

Authors provided six crowded tables of results but did not discuss their findings properly (less than a page of discussion)

References: very poorly listed--Authors need to follow proper guideline for citing and listing references.

The authors do well if they could carefully review samples of similar published articles from experienced researchers to come up with a better draft that is suitable for publication.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I recommend additional statistical review

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

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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