Reviewer’s report

Title: Malnutrition in Chakradharpur, Jharkhand: an anthropological study of perceptions and care practices from India

Version: 0 Date: 20 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Marianna Baum

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well-written manuscript that describes a study investigating the knowledge, perception and practices related to health, nutrition, care practices, and their effect on nutrition health-seeking behavior in a poor area of India, Chakradhapur, a district of Jharkhand. In this part of India, despite the government providing services aimed at treating childhood malnutrition, relapse rates in malnourished children are high, especially among infants and young children. Moreover, there was a decline in adequate infant and child feeding practices since the last national survey. Thus, understanding the drivers behind these observations is important in order to improve community-based services.

The manuscript describes a large and well-conducted anthropological study; the data was analyzed to assess differences and similarities in perception, knowledge and practices across stakeholders. While the manuscript is very well written and extensively describes the study and the findings, it is not clear who the stakeholders that provided the data were.

The manuscript provides important information on causes of severe and chronic malnutrition regarding the availability, the local customs and culture, and lack of awareness of where to seek help for ill or malnourished children, as well as lack of availability of sufficient governmental services.

However, there are shortcomings in the manuscript which include insufficient description of the difference between the governmental services provided to the population. Thus, the study describes the location and the services offered to the population under the ambulatory therapeutic feeding centers (ATFC) and functional Malnutrition Treatment Centers (MTC); however, there is no explanation of the difference between the two services or description of the practices of these services, including the size of the population they serve. Moreover, the manuscript is describing ATFC clusters without any explanation or definitions of these clusters. While available and willing mothers participated in the study, the manuscript does not provide the statistics as to the representativeness of the stakeholders and the mothers interviewed for the study. Some statistics on participants vs those not willing to participate would be helpful.

Another shortcoming of the manuscript includes an apparent lack of back-translation of the interviews with the participants and the health-care workers, which were translated into English; however, it does not appear that they were back-translated ensuring accuracy of the translation.
Overall, this is an excellent manuscript, although too lengthy; it would be helpful if the authors could considerably shorten it, particularly the parts that are repetitive.

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

Yes

**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.

Yes

**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 am able to assess the statistics

**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