Reviewer's report

Title: A nurse-delivered mental health intervention for obstetric fistula patients in Tanzania: Results of a pilot randomized controlled trial

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Reviewer: Laura Zielinski

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript by Watt et al. describes the results of a pilot randomized controlled trial investigating a mental health intervention for obstetric fistula patients in Tanzania. Overall, the manuscript is well-written and easy to follow, and clearly identifies a gap in research and treatment for this patient population. I only have a few minor comments for this paper.

Introduction:

No comments here. This section is well-written and concise, and clearly sets up the rationale for conducting this pilot study.

Methods:

1. Page 4, line 22 - You say a sample size of 60 was chosen as adequate based on the reference from Browne et al. (1995). Did you perform calculations taking into account effect size to arrive at this number? If so, I think it would be best to report all these values, and if not, you should elaborate on the justification of 60 as an adequate sample size.

2. Page 5, line 26 - While you cannot blind participants or those delivering the intervention, there are other study staff which could be blinded to the assigned conditions, such as personnel doing the allocation, data analyses, etc. Additionally, if women in both conditions completed identical surveys, those delivering them could also be blinded so as not to introduce any subtle biases when asking the questions. I'm wondering if you considered this and/or did this. If not, I think it should be a point brought up as a potential limitation.
3. Page 6, line 6 - When describing the intervention, add in how long the sessions typically were, especially given you mentioned some participants were not satisfied with the length of the sessions in the results section.

4. Page 6, line 51 - Were the patients' obstetric history self-reported? And if so, were there answered verified at all using medical records?

5. Page 8, line 56 - Did you have any feasibility criteria for recruitment rates?

6. Page 8, line 15 - You mentioned intervention feasibility is defined by the number of sessions attended. Was there a benchmark percentage of attendance levels that you chose to indicate the intervention being successful or not?

7. Page 8, line 27 - Provide some more detail about the participant feedback. In particular, what questions were asked? If possible, consider providing a copy of the questionnaire outline as a supplementary file.

Results:

8. Page 10, line 60 - Expand on what exactly you defined as "appropriate" regarding the intervention for patients. What sorts of responses did the patients provide that helped you come to this conclusion?

Discussion:

9. Did you adapt the study protocol at all based on the experience of conducting the pilot study or the feedback from patients? For example, it was mentioned that follow-up attrition rates varied based on things such as PTSD and surgery success. Given these results, you may consider proposing ways to increase follow-up completion rates for subgroups of patients who may be most at-risk for dropout.

Conclusion:

No comments here. Again, this section was very well-written.
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