

## Reviewer's report

**Title:** Formative supervision of reproductive health care in Senegal: results from four districts

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 19 December 2006

**Reviewer:** Tanya J C. Marchant

### Reviewer's report:

#### General

The subject matter is very interesting and is becoming increasingly pertinent for researchers and planners to learn from experiences in different settings. However, currently the manuscript has a number of problems that impede clarity of what was done, and a lack of information around evaluation that makes firm conclusions difficult to draw. The points raised in Major Compulsory Revisions are critical areas for re-writing.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. The details of the formative supervision intervention are outlined in the introduction. The method section gives details of the evaluation approach. These need to be reconciled as the title gives the impression that what is being described is the intervention – but the reader loses sight of the intervention and is distracted by the evaluation.
2. Currently it is not easy to decipher where, and in how many places, this work was carried out. Plus a clearer distinction needs to be made between piloting areas and areas included in evaluation. It appears that evaluation tools were adjusted between pilot and main study (as expected), yet pilot results are included in the main conclusions.
3. Researchers were able to complete the intervention exercise in very few places. This makes the results very hard to generalise – what were the differences between complete and incomplete intervention areas that bias interpretation?
4. The discussion states that the two evaluations took place with different evaluators and sometimes different health workers were in place in facilities. Again, this introduces a very serious bias into the study.
5. No discussion is made of possible difference in socio-economics between the districts – perhaps (particularly for community involvement) this would be a confounding factor?

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

None at this stage given the need for a re-write.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.