

## **Reviewer's report**

**Title:** The role of Nurses and Midwives in the Expanded Programme on Immunization and in Supplementary Immunization Activities for Polio Eradication and Measles Control: A survey of Nurses and Midwives in Sudan and Zambia

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 26 November 2008

**Reviewer:** Lee Da Rocha Silva

### **Reviewer's report:**

The article is not only interesting but also significant. The question addressed is new, well defined and relevant. The article is also well structured and well written in general. More specifically:

- No major compulsory revisions are needed.
- The following minor essential revisions as well as discretionary revisions are recommended:

Methods employed (p.4):

1. Subsection, "Study sites": Define "AFP".

2. Subsection, "Study participants":

2.1 Indicate the number of "District ..." managers in the study.

2.2 Move the first sentence ("Forty-eight nurses ...") in "(a) Nurses' regular work tasks" (p.5) to the subsection, "Study participants".

3. Subsection, "Study variables and data collection":

3.1 Elaborate on the type of questionnaire used (e.g. whether it included closed-ended questions and thus fixed response options, or the latter and open-ended questions); and note the period on which the participants had to report (e.g. 2006-2007).

3.2 Elaborate on the fieldwork process, i.e. when (e.g. end of 2007), where (e.g. health clinics) and how it occurred (e.g. project leader got permission from health authorities).

3.3 Move the sentence in "Data analysis" to "Study variables ...", word this sentence more clearly (e.g. change it to "The key findings were descriptively summarized"), delete "Data analysis", and change "Study variables ..." to "Study variables, data collection and analysis".

Data presented in "Results" ( pp.4-8):

4. Distinguish clearly between the data obtained from managers and nurses/midwives respectively. For example, divide the text into two subsections, with (a) the first including the first paragraph and titled "Information reported by district managers", and with (b) the second including the subsequent paragraphs and titled "Information reported by nurses and midwives". (c) Delete the title,

“Survey of nurses and midwives”.

5. Clarify/define the following in the first paragraph (p.5): (a) “medical officers”; (b) “... vaccine delivery strategies included fixed site, outreach, mobile and campaigns”; (c) “DTP3”; (d) the last two sentences before “Survey of nurses and midwives” (e.g. indicate what “... all seven functions” entailed as these cannot refer to the eight functions mentioned in brackets). (Correct the spelling of “Praralysis”.)

6. Subsection, “(a) Routine tasks of nursing personnel at health facilities” (pp.5-6):

6.1 Given the content, delete the subtitle “(a) Nurses’ regular work tasks”, and change the subsection’s title to “(a) Routine tasks and service conditions of nurses and midwives”.

6.2 Change “The responses to questions ... is presented in Table 1” to “The responses of the nurses and midwives to questions ... are presented ...”.

6.3 Summarize the figures from Table 1 presented in the text consistently, instead of just repeating the tabled figures, and do this in all the subsections on the data. For example, rephrase “The proportion of respondents who ... were 38% in Sudan and 63% in Zambia” (p.5) to “A substantial proportion (38%) of the respondents in Sudan and the majority (63%) in Zambia were aware of ...”.

6.4 Clarify the third and the second last sentence on page 5. For example, note whether the tasks referred to in the second last sentence relate to Zambia or to Zambia and Sudan.

7. Subsection, “(b) Improving work performance and incentives during regular work” (p.6):

7.1 Change this title to reflect the title of Table 2, i.e. change it to “(b) Factors perceived as improving the work performance and job-related incentives of nurses and midwives during routine work”.

7.2 Change the title of Table 3 to reflect the wording in the text, e.g. to “Reported job-related incentives during routine work”.

8. Subsection, “(a) Roles of nurses and midwives in SIAs”(p.6):

8.1 Change this title so that it follows on “(b) Factors perceived to improve work performance and job-related incentives during routine work”, i.e. change it to “(c) Roles of nurses and midwives in SIAs for polio and measles”.

8.2 Align the figures noted in the third and fourth sentences in this subsection with the tabled figures. For example, note that in Sudan management and leadership functions were reported by nearly a quarter (24%) of the respondents in the case of both polio and measles SIAs.

9. Subsection, “(b) Factors and incentives for good performance during Polio and Measles SIAs” (p.7):

Change this title so that it follows on the previous subsection, i.e. change it to “(d) Factors and incentives for good performance during SIAs for polio and measles”. Also, consider aligning this title with the related earlier title so that it reads: “(b)

Factors perceived as improving the work performance and job-related incentives of nurses and midwives during ...”.

10. Subsection, “(c) Barriers to good performance during SIAs” (p.7):

10.1 Change this title so that it follows on the previous subsection and is consistent with related previous titles, i.e. change it to “(e) Barriers to the good performance of nurses and midwives during SIAs for polio and measles”.

10.2 Align the percentages/factors noted in the second sentence in the subsection with those tabled, i.e. note “negative perceptions ...” (26.9%) instead of “mobile populations” (26.0%).

11. Subsection, “Lessons learnt from supplementary vaccination campaigns and optimizing the role of the work of nurses and midwives”:

11.1 Simplify the title and align it to related titles, e.g. change it to “(f) Lessons learnt from SIAs for polio and measles for improving the work performance of nurses and midwives”.

11.2 Re-write this subsection, (a) noting whether the data were obtained from the participating nurses and midwives or/and from district managers; (b) indicating the difference between the first and second sentence, i.e. the difference between “... lessons learnt ... to improve the work ...” and “... optimizing the role of the work of nurses ...”; (c) indicating whether the statement, “... in Sudan the respondents ...”, applied to all or some of the respondents in Sudan; and (d) delete “Table 6” or indicate its relevance in this subsection.

12. Subsection, “(e) Best practices” (pp.7-8):

12.1 Align this title with earlier titles, e.g. change it to “(g) Best practices in SIAs for polio and measles”.

12.2 Phrase more clearly the following sentences: (a) “In the area of AFP surveillance, when they were trained and assigned as AFP and measles surveillance focal persons”, and (b) “Nurses and midwives worked together ... to make individual plans for measles ...”.

13. Standardize the tables, e.g. number the variables in all the tables instead of in some; keep the “n” in lower case in all the tables; consistently extend figures to include the first digit after the decimal point, for example 50.0 instead of 50.

Discussion and conclusion (pp.8-10):

14. The discussion and conclusion are well balanced and adequately supported by the data. The following, however, needs attention:

14.1 Divide the first part of the discussion into more paragraphs, e.g. start a new paragraph after the sentence (p.8), “Delegation of responsibilities to others ... level of training”.

14.2 Clarify what is meant with (a) “higher responsibilities” in the third sentence from the top of page 9; and with (b) “the same well known factors” in the second paragraph from the top on p.9.

Title and abstract (pp.1-2):

15. Consider rephrasing the title to read “Expanded programme on immunization

and supplementary immunization activities for polio eradication and measles control: the role of nurses and midwives in Sudan and Zambia”.

Quality of written English

The text, tables and references need to be edited by a copy-editor with special attention to punctuation.

Statistical review

The manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

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I, Dr Lee da Rocha Silva, declare that I have no competing interests.

Declared on 24 November 2008, Pretoria, South Africa.