Peer Review Report

Review Report on Incidence and predictors of mortality among preterm neonates admitted to Jimma University Medical Center, Southwest Ethiopia: a retrospective follow-up study

Original Article, Int J Public Health

EVALUATION

Q 1   Please summarize the main findings of the study.

The manuscript attempts to assess survival status and predictors of neonatal mortality in Southwest Ethiopia using Cox proportional hazards regression model among 505 preterm neonates admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of Jimma University Medical Center during 2017 to 2019. I would like to congratulate the authors to this attempt addressing an under-investigated topic, since limited studies addressed from Ethiopian perspective. Following are some of the concerns to address before taking a final decision.

Q 2   Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

The authors suggested to (a) develop a conceptual framework; (b) discuss the strengths and develop limitations further and especially for each limitation (including use of obsolete data) and it would be good to say why you believe it is not a major or not affecting your study; (c) figures given in this manuscript are rather fuzzy, and give the figures with higher resolution;(d) specific interventions based on study findings for further scale-up.

Q 3   Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.

A large number of (>14/15) independent variables used to examine the associations, without any conceptual clarity. It is also not clear for the loss of significance (for instance, age, antenatal care visit during the current pregnancy etc.,) in adjusted AHR from crude HR/CHR values. It seems the authors purposively considered the variables for analytical model point of view, without considering the conceptual relationships, assumptions. Moreover, most of these are interrelated and no correlations were examined and reported in the manuscript. In other words, the authors failed in conceptualization the study with outcome of interest and its linkages either with a strong theoretical background or conceptual framework, appropriately using the obsolete data (conducted between Jan-2017 and Dec-2019).

In conclusion, the subject addressed in this manuscript is worth of investigation, nevertheless still some minor improvement could be sought; and acceptable for possible consideration.

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4   Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

Yes

Q 5   Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes

Q 6   **Is the English language of sufficient quality?**

Needs minor language improvement/editing

Q 7   **Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?**

No.

Q 8   **Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)**

Yes

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 9   **Originality**   ▮▮▮▮▯

Q 10   **Rigor**   ▮▮▮▮▮

Q 11   **Significance to the field**   ▮▮▮▮▯

Q 12   **Interest to a general audience**   ▮▮▮▮▯

Q 13   **Quality of the writing**   ▮▮▮▮▯

Q 14   **Overall scientific quality of the study**   ▮▮▮▮▯

REVISION LEVEL

Q 15   **Please make a recommendation based on your comments:**

Minor revisions.