

Review of: "Using a Health and Demographic Surveillance System to Assess Stillbirths Trends and Risk Factors in Siaya County, Kenya between 2008 and 2019"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

A very important study in maternal and child health, considering the gap in health systems to capture adequate data on birth events and especially on stillbirths. More often than not, stillbirths, miscarriages, and neonatal deaths are usually confused for each other and henceforth cause misreporting and wrong decision-making.

A number of areas in the manuscript, however, need to be addressed, including the following:

1. Considering that the study period for data collection was between 2008 and 2019 and yet the manuscript was written in 2023, there is a need to review the analysis in alignment with the relevant policy guidelines. Otherwise, this significant discrepancy in timing renders the study obsolete.
2. Your inclusion criteria for the study population are women 13- 49 yrs, but the standard age for Women of Reproductive Age (WRA) is 15- 49 yrs according to the WHO.
3. It will be helpful to indicate the population of WRA in the study area so as to make sense of your assessment and deductions.
4. In your methodology, please indicate the sampling method and perhaps the rationale for selecting the three sub-counties (Rarieda, Alego-Usonga, and Gem) among the 5 administrative units of Siaya county.
5. In your discussions, you have introduced a number of new independent variables such as ANC trends whose descriptive statistics are missing. ANC is a very important parameter in birth outcomes and therefore helpful to include it if data is available.
6. In your study design, you indicated that the HDSS is managed by the KEMRI-CGHR and that data was collected by the HDSS staff. Some of the policy documents you quoted already show that the Kenya Community Health Information System for the period under study had very comprehensive indicators on births being collected routinely by CHVs. You may want to review your recommendation on the need to have this data collected by CHVs and address the specific gaps realized in reporting on stillbirths.

All in all, your paper is very interesting, and I trust that making the relevant revisions will push you toward having it published. All the very best!