Early Marriage among young girls in Eastern Ethiopia: trend during 2008-2018 [version 1; peer review: 1 approved with reservations]

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Abstract
Early marriage practices undermine girls’ autonomy and seriously affect their physical and mental wellbeing. Monitoring the trends and understanding the drivers is essential in intervening against early marriage. However, many studies on early marriage in Ethiopia are cross-sectional, focusing only on the magnitude at a single point in time. Hence, we extracted data of girls of 10-17 years from Kersa Health and Demographic Surveillance System (Kersa HDSS) database for the period of 2008–2018 in order to examine the trends of early marriage. In this data note we provide the details of a research database of 24,452 girls in the age group of 10-17 years. The extracted data include date of marriage and the girls’ socio-demographic variables. Other variables considered to be potentially associated with timing of marriage were also extracted. The purpose of this publication is to describe the dataset for external researchers who may be interested in making use of it as a secondary use of their routinely collected data. This dataset is available at https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.15034812.

Keywords
Key words: adolescent girls, incidence, early marriage, Ethiopia
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Introduction
Early marriage is any marriage where at least one of the parties is under 18 years of age (OHCHR, 2019). It undermines girls’ autonomy and seriously affects their physical and mental wellbeing (Nour, 2006; Walker, Mukisa, Hashim, & Ismail, 2013). Ethiopia ranks 15th in the prevalence of early marriage and 5th in the total number of early marriages globally. Nearly 40% of girls in Ethiopia are married before they turn 18 years and approximately 14% are married before their 15th birthday (UNICEF, 2018). Monitoring the trend and understanding the drivers is essential in intervening against early marriage. However, evidence on the effectiveness of interventions from longitudinal community-based studies is scarce. Hence, we extracted data of girls of 10–17 years from the Kersa Health and Demographic Surveillance System (Kersa HDSS) database for the period of 2008–2018 in order to examine the trends of early marriage.

Methods
This data note used data from Kersa Health and Demographic Surveillance System (Kersa HDSS). The Kersa HDSS is located in the eastern Hararghe Zone of the Oromia regional state in Ethiopia. The initial baseline household and population census were conducted in 2007, and the database is updated every six months with registration of demographic (birth, death and migration) and health (reproductive and morbidity) events (Assefa et al., 2016). The data are collected by trained interviewers who are mainly residents in the study Kebele (the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia). In each round of data collection, the household head or any adult member of the household is interviewed using structured forms that are prepared to capture a specific demographic or health event.

Source of data
Data was extracted from Kersa HDSS database for the period of January 01, 2008 to December 31, 2018 for girls in the age group of 10 to 17 years. The extracted data includes date of marriage and girl’s socio-demographic variables. Other variables considered to be potentially associated with the timing of marriage were also extracted. Microsoft Excel 2010 (Microsoft Excel, RRID:SCR_016137) was used to process the data (an open access alternative to Excel 2010 is Google Sheets).

Ethical approval
Kersa HDSS has ethical approval from the Institutional Health Research Ethics Review Committee (IHRERC) of Haramaya University at the initiation of the surveillance system and renewed every five years. The approval written informed consent for KHDSS head office for the sharing of girls’ data was obtained from the IHRERC of Haramaya University, Ethiopia with approval number (IHRERC/177/2018). The accessed data were used for this research only.

Data availability
Datasets are available publicly via:


The project contains the following underlying data.

- Early marriage data.xlsx. (contains data in excel spreadsheet of ten years of marriage data and girl’s socio-demographic variable)

Data are available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY 4.0).

Author contributions
All authors contributed equally from conception, design, data extraction, and statistical analysis to interpretation of data. They also took part in the drafting of the manuscript and final approval for submission.

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References


OHCHR: Child and forced marriage, including in humanitarian settings. 2019.


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This data note describes the data set of Kersa Health and Surveillance System (Kersa HDSS) for the use of secondary analysis. It is appropriate for the publication in F1000 research. However, some parts of this data note needs information to explain the data set in a more detailed way before indexing.

My minor concerns are the following:

- Introduction section should be elaborated by explaining the benefits of a data set for researchers who study child marriages. The definitions of early marriage, and the choice of using early marriage instead of child marriage should be explained. Since, in many data sets it is measured by the age of marriage before 18 or 15. The reference time should be included about the prevalence of child marriage of Ethiopia.

- In the material and method section (it must be named as), more explanation is needed about the system of KERSA HDSS. The aim of the system in general, sample size, how data is collected, what are the other specific demographic events, other variables and what are the limitations of the data set some of the questions that should be mentioned.

- Some minor grammar mistakes should be reviewed.

Is the rationale for creating the dataset(s) clearly described?
Yes

Are the protocols appropriate and is the work technically sound?
Yes

Are sufficient details of methods and materials provided to allow replication by others?
Are the datasets clearly presented in a useable and accessible format?
Yes

**Competing Interests:** No competing interests were disclosed.

**Reviewer Expertise:** Domestic violence against women, child, early and forced marriages, qualitative research methods, gender equality

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.

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