Reviewer's report

Title: Use of comorbidity lookback to determine prevalence and risk in pregnancy

Version: 1 Date: 25 November 2010

Reviewer: Kate Brameld

Reviewer's report:

In general I think this is a well-written paper but there are a few points I would like to see clarified before the paper was to be published. These are documented below.

Major compulsory revision (as interpretation of results depends on this)

1. Ascertainment of diseases - It is not clear precisely how chronic diseases were ascertained. Are multiple diagnosis and procedure codes available in the medical record? If so, how were they used to identify chronic disease? Secondly, if non-principal diagnostic codes were selected, might these refer to comorbid conditions, in which case the recency of the condition cannot be conferred.

Minor essential revisions

2. The title needs to specify prevalence and risk of what's being determined?

3. Secondly, I think diagnostic and procedure codes should be more readily available to the reader and included as an Appendix.

4. Data analysis - please specify in the paper how the first day of pregnancy was estimated. What was the range of gestation? Were all risk factors for obstetric hemorrhage able to be measured from the birth record?

5. Introduction - second paragraph - The authors suggest that "extending the lookback period may limit the number of subjects available". Please explain how this works.

Discretionary revisions

6. Page 8 - 2nd para - "most prevalent disease" - disease with the highest prevalence?

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.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests