Reviewer’s report

Title: Challenges in the Care for Consanguineous Couples: an Explorative Interview Study among General Practitioners and Midwives

Version: 1 Date: 27 July 2012

Reviewer: Hanan Hamamy

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for asking me to review this manuscript that explores the experiences, attitudes and beliefs of such primary health care professionals in Netherlands regarding their care for consanguineous couples.

As noted in the manuscript, consanguineous marriages are increasing in Western countries due to the preservation of this cultural norm among migrants who originate from highly consanguineous areas. The manuscript is a required timely publication to assess how general practitioners and midwives in primary health care settings in western countries are responding to this increase in numbers of consanguineous couples within preconception and prenatal care.

The following are my comments to the authors for minor essential revisions:

In the abstract and for international readers, it would be recommended to mention that the study was conducted in Netherlands.

Introduction section: First sentence in second paragraph should read: It is well known that a higher risk of congenital disorders is present in children of consanguineous parents, with a reported average increased risk of 1.7 – 2.8% for the offspring of first-cousin couples over the baseline 2-3% risk in the general population.

The authors could possibly give a general background on preconception care facilities in the Netherlands and whether professionals address in anyway the 2-3% risk of congenital disorders expected in any pregnancy.

In the section on study design and participants, did any of the participants share a similar culture to the consanguineous couples?

In the results section, on the “Beliefs about consanguineous couples’ religious and social values”, the authors give a number of quotes from the participants as heard or felt in their session with a consanguineous couple. It could be noteworthy to indicate approximately how often the participants see consanguineous couples in their care and whether the questionnaire included a question on number of consanguineous couples seen by each participant?

The problem of language barrier is well emphasized in this section.

Under the heading of “Topic’s sensitivity”, the term “not done” in referring to
consanguineous couples is not understood in this sentence “most participants admitted they believed consanguinity to be not done.”

My answer is yes to all the following questions addressed to the reviewer:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
3. Are the data sound?
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
9. Is the writing acceptable?

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that there are no competing interests.