Reviewer's report

Title: Assisting informed decision making for labour analgesia: A randomised controlled trial of a decision aid for labour analgesia versus a pamphlet.

Version: 1 Date: 15 April 2009

Reviewer: Jane Sandall

Reviewer's report:

This study aimed to compare the effectiveness of a decision aid for labour analgesia versus a pamphlet on decisional conflict (primary outcome), knowledge, satisfaction with decision making, and anxiety in regards to labour analgesia. The question is justified and well defined. The sample was primiparous women, in their final trimester, who were planning a vaginal birth of a single infant giving birth in the public and private health system in Australia.

• Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Additional data is needed in the paper as per CONSORT guidance.

Background data on context such as the epidural rates in the study sites and the % of women who gave birth in the public and private system should be included in the baseline data, as both are known to be important contextual factors influencing processes and outcomes of care.

It would be helpful to know the total number of women who were eligible and the number excluded.

Please could the authors clarify who was working through decision aid with women, was it RA or midwife? This is important in terms of scale up of an intervention in terms of feasibility.

What is the rationale for 3 months follow up, is there a possibility this is too late in terms of reflecting on birth?

Could more details be provided on how bias was minimised.

The demographics of women in the sample to the childbearing population need to be presented, it is unclear how representative study population is.

What were the outcomes for all women including those who had a choice forced and were the numbers same between groups?

Was randomisation 2:1, it is not clear whether there were three arms to this trial, if so, then this needs to be clarified.

Outcomes should be presented as estimated effect size and its precision (e.g., 95% confidence interval).

The conclusions of the paper seem to be rather over optimistic with regard to the
usefulness of the decision aid. Readers may wonder whether the resources involved in going through a decision aid compared to a short leaflet are worth it in terms of added value?

• Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

An example of some text from the decision aid in an appendix would be helpful to the reader to understand the nature of the tool.

• Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

There needs to be consistency in terminology, currently the both terms ‘patients’ and ‘women’ are used.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interest