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: 5 Date: 20 December 2009

Reviewer: Jane Sandall

Reviewer’s report:

I thank the authors for their detailed response, the majority of which have been dealt with. I have outlined below the remaining outstanding queries.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. 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.

The authors are reluctant to provide information regarding background epidural and pharmacological rates. However, it is important to provide adequate information regarding the context within which an intervention is provided to aid readers in deciding applicability in their setting, and to provide an understanding of the results. Women use information from a range of sources to inform their decisions and one of these is the culture and usual practice in the setting where they plan to give birth. Because of this, it is important that the reader knows that the epidural rate varied between 26% and 50% in the settings in which the women were planning to give birth. In addition, there is some discussion in the paper by the authors regarding the difference between the intentions of women regarding epidural and pharmacological pain relief and what they received. So for this reason, it is also important for this contextual background to be provided please.

2. 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.

It is still not clear that the women work through the decision aid on their own. Please could the information provided in response to this query be included in the paper.

4. Could more details be provided on how bias was minimised.

This is very helpful information. Please include in the paper.

Additional comments

Introduction Para 4 - Please include a definition of decisional conflict with
supporting reference. It is provided later in the paper. Please move to the first time the reader encounters this concept.

Study setting - I am not sure that ‘choose’ is the right word in relation to options available to women in relation to the public and private care. A better word may be ‘options available within their funding scheme’ or some such words.

It is stated that women in the private hospital receive all their care from an obstetrician. Please clarify whether this includes labour care in addition to attending the birth.

Data analysis- Please state strategy for dealing with missing responses on the scale items.

Terminology - Please replace compliance with adherence throughout paper.

It is not usual to use the word ‘patients’ when discussing pregnant women. Please replace.

Limitations - The attrition rate at 3 months is over 20%, please comment on how this may bias the results.

Discussion- It is not overly clear whether the authors feel that the decision aid was helpful. I am also concerned that because the results regarding the decision aid with and without an audio component were combined, it leaves the reader not knowing whether the way forward. Could the authors clarify this?

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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