Reviewer's report

Title: Crying babies, tired mothers - dealing with the hurdles during the postnatal hospital stay: An interpretive phenomenological study

Version: 1  Date: 17 September 2009

Reviewer: Della Forster

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper. It is on an important topic. Please find here comments on areas that I consider need minor revision.

Language: Although this paper is well written, throughout the paper the language requires revision. I think this is an issue of translation into English. Some words are not incorrect, but are also not commonly used, so some consideration could be given to changing them. These include "restoration" e.g. could be called "recovery" or "restoration to health"; "fussy baby" might be more commonly called an "unsettled baby"; "living in a partnership" could be "partnered"; "shortage of sleep" could be "lack of sleep"; "whining" also has very negative connotations and should perhaps be changed to something else. Other words to consider changing or explaining would be things like "custodial" staff on the postnatal wards and "surveillance". Similarly, sentence structure and wording throughout could be relooked at.

Background: The heading should be moved up to include the first paragraph of the paper.

Methods: Could the gestation at recruitment be clarified, and also a description of who approached the women be included. Also - could the authors clarify what data collection exactly took place in the postnatal wards. They call it participant observation - but it seems more than that as it included conversations with mothers which were then recorded as field notes (is that right) - but on occasions where the conversation seemed to be going longer a tape recorder was used? Have I got that correct? Would you therefore call this more than 'observation' if the researcher was interacting with the women.

And in terms of this paper - was only data collected in hospital used, or is some of what is included in this paper reflections on interview data collected later. That is fine if so, but it would be good for the reader to be really clear about this.

Results: I am not sure that it is necessary to say all women were white, unless there is a reason to expect this may have changed any responses. And I am not sure what is meant by "a noticeable cluster of nursing professions". Also in the same paragraph - can it be made clearer what type of birth women had - the two mentioned don't cover all options - e.g. was there any emergency c/s? Were the others all normal births or were any instrumental - again this may be a language issue. I would think it is also important for the reader to know whether all the
women were breastfeeding or not, as this would be another factor in this mix. I am assuming they all were, but do not know this for sure.

I am not sure what "run for every crap" means - in one of the quotes.

Carol is quoted a lot - much more so than others - I am assuming this is fine and related to the methodolgy, but it would be good to be reassured of this by the authors.

The phrase "severe impairment of their personal wellbeing" seems quite drastic - is tis supported by the data? Or is it possible it should be expressed in another way?

Nurses are mentioned a lot but not midwives - is that because it is all nurses providing care not midwives, or because that is how the women speak about the care providers? This may need an explanation for international readers.

A mother "at the end of her strengths" is not a phrase likely to be easily understood by people.

Discussion:
I think it is an overstatement of the findings to say that they "have major implications for postnatal care". I think it would be more reasonable to conclude that they are really important and raise important issues and suggest the need for further work in this area.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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'