Author's response to reviews

Title: A statewide review of postnatal care in private hospitals in Victoria, Australia

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Version: 4 Date: 7 April 2010

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

Re: response to reviews on the paper entitled “A statewide review of postnatal care in private hospitals in Victoria, Australia”.

Thank you for the reviews of the above paper. Please find below a detailed point by point response to all the reviewers’ comments.

Thank you again for considering this paper

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jo Rayner
Reviewer 1
1. Abstract: Misleading nature of referring to women’s satisfaction of postnatal care in the study.
The abstract has been amended making it clearer that that the study refers to care providers’ views and not to women’s views.

2. Introduction/background: Inclusion of some socio-political contextual information about post birth care.
We have included more information regarding the socio-political context of postnatal care (Page 4, paragraph 2).

3. Methods: Further information on the development of the survey in association with the research objective;
The methods section has been amended to include further information about the development of the survey (Page 7, paragraph 1).

4. No rationale is provided for such a varied professional sample of key informants; and the focus of the interviews could be more explicit.
The methods section has been amended to include information about the rationale for the varied sample of care providers involved in the key informant interviews and the focus of the interviews made more explicit (Page 8, paragraphs 2 and 3):

5. Results & Discussion:
How old is the private care sector in Victoria and did it copy the public sector? Additional information regarding both private and public postnatal care in Victoria has been included in the background to the paper. This includes data regarding changes to private and public health status over time. We hope this additional information meets the reviewers’ request.

The term well-baby nursery needs an international perspective as well as an explanation of their function? A description of the well-baby nursery is included in the glossary of terms requested by another reviewer and the discussion has been amended to include the rationale for the maintenance of well-baby nurseries in private hospitals (Page 21, paragraph 3)

Addition of breastfeeding data at six week? Breastfeeding data at six weeks was not included in the paper as hospitals are not responsible for women and their infants after discharge and would not have this information. We do however report overall breastfeeding rates at six months, noting that women in the private sector are likely to have higher rates of initiation and maintenance of breastfeeding (Page 22, paragraph 2).

Discussion of local national context for midwives of staffing levels and their career development? The implications of midwife staffing in maternity care is covered in more depth in a paper reporting findings from the public review (Forster et al. Staffing in postnatal units: is it adequate for the provision of quality care? Findings from a state-wide review of postnatal care in Victoria, Australia. BMC Health Services Research 2006, 6:83) and is cited in the discussion.
Discussion of development of hotel care?
The discussion has been amended to include further evidence related to the provision of health care in hotels (Page 21, paragraph 1).

Reviewer 2
1. Clearly reiterating the aim of the paper and make clear that the review is from the viewpoint of care providers.
We have stated more clearly the aim of the study in the body of the paper: (Page 6, paragraph 2). We have also made clear in the text in a number of places that the review is about care providers’ views, in the Abstract (page 1) and Introduction (Page 6, paragraph 2).

2. Information on the analysis of the open-ended responses in the survey and the interview data.
The methods have been amended to include more details of the analysis of the open-ended responses in the survey (Page 7, last paragraph) and the interview data (Page 9, paragraph 1).

3. Making it clear that the study did not included women’s views
We have made the suggested amendments as detailed above. See abstract and (page 6, paragraph 2)

4. Issue of bias
The reviewer raises the issue that the results may be biased given the private nature of the health care system. One of the specific aims of this study was to provide a comprehensive exploration of postnatal care in Victoria with this study adding to the original study which only included women in the public sector. Given that one third of women give birth in the private sector we considered that this study would reduce bias and provide a more representative sample than either a private or public study. We have combined the results in the tables to make the similarities and differences between the types of care more explicit.

Reviewer 3
Minor essential revisions
1. Acknowledging the limitations of the study.
The limitations of the study have been included on page 24, paragraph 2

2. The sentence on page 20 has been changed as suggested by the reviewer:
Based on the available evidence, women in the private sector would appear to be more satisfied with hospital postnatal care.