Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 29 January 2010

Reviewer: Heather Whitford

Reviewer's report:

This is a well executed and well written study. However the topic is very culturally specific and the findings are of limited relevance to other settings with different models of care provision. The purpose of the study is well described and the methods appropriate given that it was replication of a previous study of public hospitals in the same area. The reporting of findings was clear and relevant to the aim of the study (in the abstract).

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

The aim is stated in the abstract but needs to be reiterated clearly in the paper and it needs to be made clear that the review is from the viewpoint of the care providers.

Minimal information is provided about the methods used to analyse the open answers in the survey and the interview data: this needs to be expanded.

In some places the discussion does not make clear that the study did not ask for women’s views. Suggested wording changes in italics are proposed below:

P18 ‘key informants identified aspects they believed which may contribute to this including’

P 19 ‘While the key informants reported that they believed women were satisfied with the early discharge initiatives such as hotel care and midwife home visits’

It is hard to disentangle the individual elements of care (such as longer length of stay, etc) from the fact that care is private, and facilities better (p19). Consequently greater caution should be exercised in the interpretation of these results (particularly the comparison with care in the public sector).

The key messages at the end do not draw specifically on the findings of this paper alone but refer to the findings of another study. Neither study asked for women’s views, yet the key message is that women’s satisfaction needs to be improved. This conclusion appears to stray beyond the findings of this study.

The biased nature of the findings needs to be acknowledged, given the private nature of the health care system. Presumably respondents had a vested interest in presenting their service in a positive light?
A glossary of terms should be provided for readers unfamiliar with the system of care in Australia: ‘hotel care’, ‘well-baby’ nursery, ‘care maps’, ‘breastfeeding day stay services’, ‘casual bank’, ‘mothercraft nurses’ ‘Division 2 nurses’, ‘enrolled nurses’

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

**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.