Reviewer's report

Title: A prevalence survey of every-day activities in pregnancy

Version: 1 Date: 6 May 2010

Reviewer: Michelle Newton

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the paper “A prevalence survey of every-day activities in pregnancy” by Samantha J Lain, Jane B Ford, Ruth M Hadfield and Christine L Roberts. The paper was well written, and makes an important contribution to further research in the field of pregnancy complications.

The relevance of the paper is clearly articulated and the discussions support the findings of the paper. The limitations of the paper are discussed in a transparent manner, allowing future researchers to determine the suitability of these findings to their own projects.

I have a few suggestions for the authors to consider.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The background would benefit from more detail on how prevalence of these activities in pregnancy complications is currently reported. The authors make reference to studies that report incidence of activities “at any time during pregnancy” and could provide more clarity for the reader on how the information collected in this research project will be more useful to researchers in future studies. The authors refer to “a number of studies that report the prevalence of select activities at any time during pregnancy” in the discussion section – reference to these studies in the background would better explain the justification for this research. A brief description of the evidence that is known (including prevalence of activities that have been reported in this paper) would be best placed in the background. This would also make the interpretation of the discussions section more meaningful.

2. Detail on the recruitment process would be beneficial for the reader to be able to determine the suitability of the sampling methods. Participants were approached in the antenatal clinic of a tertiary obstetric hospital - were they recruited from a range of clinics & different days in the week? The reality of recruitment in this setting means that women may be arranged into clinic attendance on certain days of the week based on location of residential address, employment (i.e. Manipulating their access to clinics at certain times). To ensure that the reader understands the nature of the sample to determine suitability to future research, additional information on the recruitment process would be helpful. This may also need to be articulated in the limitations of the paper if the recruitment may have included a disproportionate group based on dates and times of recruitment.
3. A description of the piloting process (how many women was the survey tool piloted on? Was it re-piloted after the refinements? What refinements were made?) is required. This information adds to an appreciation of the validity of the tool that was used.

4. Descriptions of how data was stored, what database was used, and what statistical package was used in analysis should be included in the methods section.

Discretionary Revisions

5. A copy of the questions that were asked as an appendix would add to the paper, as in reading I was considering how the questions were phrased.

6. Suggest change second sentence in abstract methods to read “Women who were at least 20 week pregnant and able to read English were invited to complete the questionnaire to assess…..

Thank you again for the opportunity to review this paper

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 interests'