Reviewer's report

Title: Differences in relative risk of stillbirth among women of different regions of origin compared with women from Germany: an analysis of the German perinatal database, 2004-2007

Version: 1 Date: 11 April 2011

Reviewer: Siri Vangen

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Differences in relative risks of Stillbirth among women of different regions of origin compared with women from Germany: analyses of the German perinatal database, 2004-2007.

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Major compulsory Revisions

General comments:
1. The article documents differences in stillbirth rates among ethnic Germans and different immigrant groups. The article has a well defined research question.

2. The manuscript adheres to relevant standards of reporting and data deposition.

3. Some of the variables included might have suboptimal validity due to reporting deficiencies to the registry or crude reporting. Inadequate reporting of complications during pregnancy such as preeclampsia among immigrants. Missing information about the specific country of origin could have an impact of the reported results. Consequences of pooling populations from large areas of origin as for example total Asia could be further addressed.

4. The manuscript adheres to the relevant standards of reporting and data deposition.

5. The discussion is adequately supported by the data. However, the crude population grouping and missing data about the specific country of origin could hide important information about the differences in stillbirths. Immigrants’ health often mirrors the situation in their country of origin. For example Asia includes some of the most deprived areas of the world such as Central Asia with high stillbirth rates and areas with some of the lowest stillbirth rates such as Japan. This issue could be further outlined.

The result of attenuated stillbirth difference after correction of socioeconomic status is interesting and point to the importance of the integration policy and education and working possibilities of immigrants. This issue could be further addressed in the discussion. As the authors state themselves indicators of SES in the present study was not optimal. Some speculations of the implications of a
better indicator of SES would be interesting.

6. The authors discuss the limitations of their work, but the limitations could be further outlined according to the issues raised above.

7. This research question has been addressed by several previous research projects in different European countries and North America. The results of previous studies also revealed a higher perinatal mortality rates among the immigrants. The current study is the first from Germany to use a nationwide dataset with a large number of births. The new findings of the current study compared to previous research addressing the same topic could be better highlighted. The new findings could be reported in the first part of the discussion and in the abstract. What about the attenuation of stillbirth difference after stratification for social status. Is this a new finding?

8. The title and the abstract largely convey what has been found. However, the impact of socioeconomic factors on stillbirth rates among immigrant populations is an important issue. These results could be implemented in the abstract. The title is complicated and could be better articulated: For example: Stillbirth differences according to regions of origin: an analysis of the German perinatal database, 2004-2007.

9. The article would also benefit from some language revisions.

Specific comments
Background 4th section. Previously reported differences in risk factors of stillbirths between immigrants and non-immigrant could be mentioned.

Discussion: Strengths and limitations: Could the low rate of preeclampsia reported in immigrant groups be a result of inadequate reporting? This issue should be discussed.

9th section page 11. The role of doctor’s delay and patients delay should be discussed.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

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