Author’s response to reviews

Title: Under-reporting of birth registrations in New South Wales, Australia

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Version: 3 Date: 26 November 2012

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

MS: 3480691197334498
Under-reporting of birth registrations in New South Wales, Australia Fenglian Xu, Elizabeth A Sullivan, Deborah A Black, Lisa R Jackson Pulver and Richard C Madden

We appreciate the comments from the editor and reviewers. The responses to the comments and the updated manuscript are as follows.

Editor's comments: "The article is now ready to be published. I have, however, few minor things which could be solved before that.

1. In Abstract, it could be clearer that 'quarters' refer to quarter of year.
   Accepted. Modified accordingly.

2. Systematise the upper age limit, >39 seems to be correct instead of >40 (e.g. Tables).
   Accepted. Modified accordingly.

3. Give the exchange rate for AUD to USD and/or EUR for those, who do not know it.
   Accepted. Modified accordingly.

4. Systematise percentages in tables to two decimals."
   Accepted. Modified accordingly.

Reviewer: Qun Mai
Reviewer's report:
I am satisfied by the authors' response to my comments.

• We thank the reviewer for this comment.

Reviewer: Ashna Mohangoo
Reviewer's report:

The revised manuscript can be accepted for publication, after the authors adjust the methods section according to my comment on their reaction on point 3 (major compulsory revision). The authors could also consider my comment on their reaction on point 1 (major compulsory revision). Finally, I am still not convinced by the significance of the findings on the quarter of the year (point raised by the third reviewer). I wonder whether this is an artifact.

Major Compulsory Revisions
(i) The inclusion criteria for MDC is from 20+ weeks of gestation or 400+ grams birth weight. These inclusion criteria are at the limit of viability. Have the authors considered the fact that parents of
babies that died in the perinatal period, especially (early) neonatal deaths following live birth will have a higher risk of non-registration?

This is a very good question. Yes, the neonatal deaths following live births increased the risk of nonregistration (AOR=3.84, 95%CI: 3.23-4.57). The variable of neonatal and postneonatal deaths following live births has been included in the regression model (Tables 2 and 3). The deaths have been included in the risk group (Table 1). The definitions of “neonatal” or postneonatal death have been added to the method section. The relative text has been updated as well.

Acceptable. However, the authors could consider studying this risk indicator as follows: early neonatal death vs. late neonatal death vs. post-neonatal death vs. no death in the first year of life. I expect that the risk of underreporting of live births would especially be elevated among early neonatal deaths.

- This is a very good idea. However the current data did not include the death information in details such as the time of death.

(iii) The methods section is incomplete. The authors should clearly define the risk factors/groups in the methods section.

Accepted. Modified accordingly.

The authors should more clearly define the non-risk and risk group, because according to the definitions is it not totally clear to which group for example a mother of Indigenous ethnicity delivering at 38.0 weeks belongs. What about: The risk group included births with one or more of the following conditions: gestational age <37 or >41 weeks, birth weight <2,500 grams, neonatal or postneonatal death, Indigenous ethnicity, maternal age <25 or >39 years and not living in major cities. The non-risk group included all remaining births with gestational age 37-41 weeks or birth weight ≥2,500 grams or no neonatal or postneonatal death or baby’s mother being non-Indigenous or aged 25–39 years or lived in major cities.

- Thanks for the comments. Modified accordingly.

Yours sincerely

Fenglian Xu