Reviewer’s report

Title: Birth registration rates in New South Wales

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Reviewer: Qun Mai

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This paper described the rates of birth registration in the State of New South Wales (NSW) in Australia and explored the factors associated with the rate of registration using linked NSW Midwives Data Collection (MDC) and NSW Registrars of Births Deaths and Marriages (RBDM) data. The manuscript is well written. The objectives are clearly defined. The strength of the study is the use of population-based linked data at the level of individual babies so that the rates of birth registration can be more accurately estimated than that of studies use summary data. Birth records are vital statistics. The topic is important for better understanding the extent of the problem (non-registration) and providing evidence for developing strategies for improving birth registration rate. It is a good reference for services planners and researchers. Despite these points, I think the manuscript seems a bit thin as it is and might be further improved if the authors could address the following comments.

Major Essential Revisions

1. In Abstract
   Methods - this study is a cross-sectional study not “… a retrospective cohort study …”
   Results – “being born between the second and fourth quarter” – what is the significance of this result?
   Conclusion – “About one-third of the non-registrations of births…” – this has not been mentioned in the results.
   Implications – “The reasons for…” – this should be moved to the Discussion.

2. In Method
   The Statistical Analysis section is missing. As indicated in Paragraph 2 – “The births in the MDC were followed up until registration by the RBDM. … The births in 2001 had the longest follow-up period of four years”, each baby had a different length of follow-up. It may be more accurate to stratify logistic regression analyses by period – year of birth, 1st -, 2nd -, 3rd - and 4th -year of follow-up. That is all babies included in each logistic regression analysis should have the same length of follow-up.

3. In Results
   Page 8, Line 2 – “the non-risk group” – has never been defined previously.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

None.