Reviewer's report

Title: Trends of Preterm birth and Low Birth Weight in Japan: Hospital-Based Study

Version: 1 Date: 26 September 2012

Reviewer: Maija Jakobsson

Reviewer's report:

The present study assesses what factors contributed to the rise in PTB and LBW deliveries in Japan, focusing on the effect of obstetrical interventions. The text is well written and the subject is interesting. Material is quite large, it includes nearly 20 000 deliveries.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The main problem is that it is not population-based material. In the text it is stated that hospital is the only perinatal center.
1. Does it mean that this hospital is the only tertiary hospital in that area?
2. Are the other hospitals large or small ones?
3. The annual delivery rate in that unit should be mentioned in the text.
4. The numbers of the general PTB, LBW rates, and caesarean section rates in Japan should be mentioned in the text more clearly.
5. Authors use the mean pH values with SD’s for prenatal outcomes. I suggest to report the proportion of newborns with low pH (<7.0 or < 7.05) in each category.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the p6 the blood gas analysis explanation should be condensed.
2. Maternal alcohol intake should be clarified. What means if mother is drinker? One proportion during the whole pregnancy or every day?

Discretionary Revisions

1. Authors use “near preterm” for deliveries 34-36 gestational weeks. I prefer “late preterm”.
2. There are too many tables. I suggest deleting Tables 2 and 4, since the main findings are already in the text.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.