Reviewer's report

Title: Cocaine use during pregnancy assessed by hair analysis in a Canary Islands cohort

Version: 2 Date: 15 August 2011

Reviewer: Melissa Whitworth

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

(1) Some detail must be given as to how it was possible to get 374 consecutive patients to agree to participate in a study. It is highly unusual that no patients decline to enter a study

(2) Why is a median value used for concaine concentrations?

(3) There needs to be consistency of terminology. Generally 'substance misuse' is the accepted terminology rather than drugs of abuse of consumption

(4) Were customised growth cahrts used for birth weight- if not this needs to be done in order to allow comparison of the two groups

(5) 4.1 They say that hair testing was better than interview yet they make no previous mention of performing an interview. They previsouly say they handed out a survey which implies that the patient fills in the questionnaire

(6) 4.4 They suggest that their screening could provide proof for entering substance misuse treatment 'which is more effective during pregnancy' but their screening was done after delivery so this statement makes no sense.

(7) 3.1 had 22% had a previous termination of pregnancy or was this 22% combined spontaneous abortions and terminations of pregnancy

(8) There is no data on whether the questionnaire used is validated either for use in pregnancy or for use in general. The wording of questionnaires screening for substance misuse is very important and will impact on the validity of the data and on the likelihood of women disclosing personal information.

(9) With regards to the tables (1 and 2) it is usual to give a number and a % rather than just a %.

Minor essential

(1) The term neonatal somatometry is not widely used and should be reconsidered

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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