Reviewer's report

Title: Incentives as Connectors: Perceptions of women and peer supporters participating in a breastfeeding incentive intervention in a disadvantaged area of North West England

Version: 1 Date: 19 November 2011

Reviewer: Catherine Angell

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Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

1. It would be helpful to give more detail about the existing peer support scheme up front in the abstract. If the reader misses the significance of the information in the 4th line of the abstract then a lot of the information in the abstract is ambiguous.

2. ‘In the UK and internationally there has been growing interest in the use of incentives to change healthy lifestyle behaviours within an educational and public health arena’. A reference would be good here perhaps.

3. ‘After the birth of a baby, new mothers can feel overwhelmed and preoccupied in adapting to their new role’ p18. This leaves the reader uncertain whether this is one of the findings or a statement of fact from other research. If it is the former then it needs to be reworded to reflect that it is your finding, and if it is the latter then it should be referenced and should be in the Discussion.

4. There are very occasional references to the first person ‘we’. This fits in perfectly with the nature of the work, but is used so infrequently that it jars slightly with the rest of the text, which errs towards the third person. Perhaps you should either choose one or the other approach?

5. I realize that there was an intrinsic link between the giving of incentives and the opportunity for peer supporters to have more contact with the women. However, this clearly makes it difficult to differentiate between the benefits of the incentives and the benefits of increased contact. I feel you need to say more about this issue, perhaps in the limitations, but more appropriately perhaps in the main part of the Discussion. Indeed, it suggests an additional area for further research which you could speculate about at greater length.

6. ‘Trust’ is mentioned as a key area on p29. I went back to the Findings to identify where this had emerged from the data. It might add weight to the statement on p29 to strengthen the comments made around ‘trust’ in the Findings.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Ref 14 – capitalization of I in Finch

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

None

Thank you for providing a very well written manuscript relating to a fascinating and important area of infant feeding research, and indeed health research in general. I have made several comments which I hope might assist you in clarifying some areas for the reader, but overall I feel that little detracts from this work.

**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'