Reviewer’s report

Title: The effectiveness of financial incentives for smoking cessation during pregnancy: Is it from being paid or from the extra aid?

Version: 1 Date: 12 December 2011

Reviewer: Van Tong

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Summary: The qualitative study attempts to explore factors by examining and comparing the stop-smoking experiences of pregnant women who were incentivized for smoking cessation and of pregnant smokers who were not incentivized for cessation.

Major Compulsory Revisions

• Incentives were provided to women based on their residence, and these women were compared to women who were not offered incentives. It was not clear to me how the pilot areas were determined (p5), and whether there might be any bias. Were they randomly chosen?

• P5, 2 para, please briefly describe the NHS Stop Smoking Services and provide references. It was not clear what these services women received. For example, in the results (p11) that it was mentioned that all women had access to NRT. Also was there biochemical feedback with women who were not incentivized?

• Reference 21 is not a study of pregnant women and incentives (p 12). This is not an appropriate reference or it should be specified that this was among non-pregnant smokers.

• A limitation of the study is the lack of details of how the program was implemented. For example, it was noted in the discussion that there may have been differential delivery of services. Can this be elaborated or evidence as such provided?

• P14, paragraph on effectiveness of financial incentives mediated by increased levels of support from services. This is a very odd conclusion based on the study presented. You provide no information on effectiveness of incentives in the study to make this conclusion. In addition, the literature on NRT has found mixed evidence on smoking cessation and improving birth outcomes.

Minor Essential Revisions

• In the results section, a number of times it was noted that certain factors were similar across groups and then the authors referenced a table (p7, 2.a; p10, 1st para). It would have been more clear to briefly summarize these factors in the text.

Discretionary Revisions

• It might be more compelling to add the effect size of incentives versus
counseling (p3, para 2).

• P5, last paragraph: Mispelled consent “Women in both groups consent…”

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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