Reviewer's report

**Title:** Father for the first time - development and validation of a questionnaire to assess fathers' experiences of childbirth. (FTFQ)

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 6 December 2011

**Reviewer:** Lars Plantin

**Reviewer's report:**

The manuscript “Father for the first time – development and validation of a questionnaire to assess fathers’ experiences of childbirth” has a high significance for the research on fatherhood and childbirth. Previous research has shown that many men do not get an adequate support as a parent during childbirth, and that this is crucial for both the men and their partner. Therefore, developing a validated questionnaire that can help us to assess first time fathers’ experiences of childbirth is of great importance. Generally, the study is based on an appropriate method which is well described. The way the researchers gradually, step by step, have searched for and validated different items and questions gives a very sound and logical impression. However, there are some minor essential revisions and considerations to be made before a recommended publication.

1. **The literature review:** Searches have been made in two medical databases – PubMed and Cinahl, and one more multidisciplinary database – Scopus. This means that a lion part of the contemporary research in social science regarding fatherhood (and masculinities) is not taken into consideration. The article lack, for example, of any reference to one of the most highly respected scientific journals in the research field – Fathering where you can find several articles with a focus on fatherhood and childbirth. A search in two of the most commonly used databases in social science; Sociological abstract and Psychinfo, yield for example more than 50 articles when using the same keywords (father, childbirth and questionnaire). One can also wonder why the authors restricted their search with the keyword ‘questionnaire’ when they were trying to identify different core domains on the subject. I strongly recommend that these weaknesses are discussed as limitation of the study. Also, the literature search yielded 94 articles but only 21 were judged to be relevant. But what were the exclusion criteria?

2. **The final questionnaire include questions on marital status.** However, it is not explained why this variable is never used in the presentation of the instrument validation or the discussion.

3. **The questionnaire was sent,** via the mothers, to 306 first time fathers and only fathers who were Swedish speaking were included. But how did the authors controlled this? How many fathers were excluded as they did not meet the inclusion criteria?

4. **The text will also gain from a review of the language**
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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