Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Breastfeeding cessation and symptoms of anxiety and depression: a longitudinal cohort study

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 16 April 2011

**Reviewer:** Azza Ahmed

**Reviewer’s report:**

*Major Compulsory Revisions*

This study was conducted to investigate whether breastfeeding cessation is related to greater postpartum symptoms of anxiety and depression than found prepartum. They also investigated the additional effect of breastfeeding cessation on postpartum symptoms of anxiety and depression when an individual had high levels of prepartum anxiety and depression. The topic of the study is very important and address breastfeeding cessation and its relation to anxiety and depression. However, the relevant literature was not thoroughly and critically reviewed. There were several methodological weaknesses that hinder its effectiveness.

The aim of the study in the abstract was not consistent with the aim inside the manuscript.

**Abstract:** “We aimed to investigate whether breastfeeding cessation is related to greater postpartum symptoms of anxiety and depression than found prepartum. We also investigated whether there is an additional effect of breastfeeding cessation on postpartum symptoms of anxiety and depression when an individual had high levels of prepartum anxiety and depression.”

**Manuscript:** The current study aims to evaluate the relationship between maternal symptoms of anxiety and depression and early breastfeeding cessation by examining data from a large prospective pregnancy cohort study.

Need to be consistent in the aims of the study throughout the manuscript. Results and conclusion should answer these aims. Conclusion in the abstract just answered one of the aims. Abstract results need to be supported statistically, i.e. type of statistical analysis they used and significance level.

**Methods:** Used present tens for study already done. Need to change tense or follow the journal guidelines. Study design need to be clarified. Is it exploratory, prospective, co-relational, longitudinal?

In the Population paragraph, the author described the inclusion criteria for hospitals (recruitment sites) (lines 71&72), but did not mention inclusion and exclusion criteria for the mothers (subjects).

Line 78, 79, the author said “The current study is based on version 3 of the quality-assured
79 data files released for research in 2007.” The author may give brief explanation about version 3 of the quality-assured 79 data files, it was not clear to me.

Line 81, the author mentioned “In addition to questionnaire data”, Which questionnaire? this is the first time to mention questionnaire. Need to describe this questionnaire, content, type of questions, was there any score given or not. For the SCL-8, what was the scoring system??

Line 97-99, the author said “We collected information on symptoms of anxiety and depression, breastfeeding, introduction of solids, and daily smoking from the questionnaires.” Again it is not clear what this questionnaire is measuring, Is it measuring anxiety and depression or just demographic and feeding pattern, need to clarify.

Sample; need to explain more about type of the sample, characteristics of sample, inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Statistics: The statistics paragraph started with “To compare mothers excluded from the study to those included”, what is the reason for comparing excluded and included mothers? Need clarification. Does it answer the research question? Linear regression attempts to model the relationship between two variables, how the author add more than two variables in each block? needs clarification

Results: Did not describe participants, need to give summary of the participant characteristics, even if it is published in previous study. Results need to be supported with level of significance inside results paragraph e.g. How was the cessation of breastfeeding associated with an increase in symptoms of anxiety and depression?

Lines 145-148 are repeated from statistics paragraph. Results should focus on answering the aims of the study. I expected different way of data analysis that explain the relationship between breastfeeding cessation and increased symptom of anxiety and depression/

Discussion: need in depth critical analysis of the results and use of new references that support or oppose the study results. Discussion is not adequately supported by the data.

Minor Essential Revisions
Throughout the manuscript, there were uncommonly used terms such as parturition, plural birth, which may be common in European countries, but I believe that depend on the journal guidelines.

Need to summarize the title of table 2.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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'