Reviewer’s report

Title: Revising acute care systems and processes to improve breastfeeding and maternal postnatal health: A pre and post intervention study in one English maternity unit

Version: 1 Date: 9 February 2012

Reviewer: Paula Sisk

Reviewer’s report:

The manuscript, Revising acute care systems and processes to improve breastfeeding and maternal postnatal health: A pre and post intervention study in one English maternity unit reports the results of a quality improvement intervention to implement evidence based postnatal practice in one hospital in the UK. This quality improvement intervention was undertaken in response to an increase in complaints from women about the quality of inpatient postnatal care. Women who delivered 6 months prior to this intervention and women who delivered 6 months after this intervention were surveyed at 10 days and three months postpartum about their breastfeeding experience as well as their health status. Use of quality improvement strategies to improve quality of healthcare increasing and data from these projects need to be shared with the medical community. This is a novel study in that it shares the experience of one hospital’s experience with implementing evidence based practices and the associated health outcomes. The manuscript is written in an objective and professional tone; however, it was difficult to read due to a number of run on sentences and due to the multiple interventions and outcomes described. This manuscript would be improved by dividing into two papers – one on interventions and outcomes related to breastfeeding and one on interventions and outcomes related to maternal postnatal health. This type of work is difficult to describe succinctly but these data are important to add to the medical literature.

1. The title is clear and informative and describes the manuscript.
2. The abstract accurately describes the objective, methods, findings, and conclusion.
3. No misspelled words were identified.

Major compulsory revisions

4. Background –
   a. page 4, line 1: Spell out United Kingdom the first time it appears in the manuscript.
   b. There needs to be a transition sentence at the end of the first paragraph. However, if this paper were divided into two papers it would be less confusing and less need for transitions between maternal health needs and breastfeeding issues.
c. Second paragraph, second sentence – I don’t think it adds anything to include in parentheses the breastfeeding rates for England. However, if this paper were divided into two papers it would be less confusing and less need for transitions between maternal health needs and breastfeeding issues.

d. Need a transition between second paragraph and the third paragraph.

e. Need to insert the primary and secondary aims of the study at the end of the background section and before the methods.

5. Methods –
   a. The statement about ethical approval on page eight needs to be moved to the end of the first paragraph on page 6.
   b. Page 6, first sentence under Setting, delete “a” between 57% and spontaneous.
   c. Third sentence in the paragraph on Setting is a run on sentence and hard to read.
   d. First sentence under Planning the intervention – run on sentence and hard to read.
   e. Second paragraph under Planning the intervention – Was revision of the way postnatal care was documented a part of the planning or part of the intervention? This is not clear. Headings for each step that were taken prior to implementing change would increase clarity.
   f. Content of intervention – Divide into specific interventions that occurred and list in chronological order.
   g. Data collection - Primary and secondary aims should be moved to the end of the background section.
   h. Statistical analyses – In the last sentence, the information in parentheses is confusing – not sure why it is there.

6. Results –
   a. Page 10, impact on breastfeeding outcomes – p value of 0.05 for initiation of breastfeeding. It is acceptable to report outcomes with p value of 0.05 but it needs to be stated that there was a trend toward a significant difference. A p value of 0.05 is statistically significant.
   b. Page 11, second sentence is confusing. Needs to be reworded.
   c. Page 11, maternal health outcomes – please define offensive vaginal loss for the international readers.
   d. Page 12, please indicate the significance of a score of >13 on the EPDS.
   e. Page 12, experiences of care – It would be less confusing to be presented with pre intervention results before post intervention results.

7. Discussion –
   a. Third paragraph, first sentence: “doing the right thing at the right time” should be deleted. This paragraph needs transitional words to move the reader from one
intervention to the next.
b. Page 14, second paragraph. CS needs to be spelled out the first time it is used. How is confidence and cesarean section related?
c. The discussion was difficult to read – it would be greatly improved by being split into two papers: one on breastfeeding and one on maternal health and satisfaction.
d. Limitations of the work were clearly stated.
e. In the discussion the authors clearly acknowledge previous work upon which this study was built.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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.