Reviewer's report

Title: An Exploratory Study of the Variables Impacting Preterm Birth Rates in New Mexico

Version: 3 Date: 30 March 2012

Reviewer: Jason L Salemi

Reviewer’s report:

Discretionary Revisions:
- page 6, there is still confusion, on my part, with the gestational age variable. First, in your description of the method chosen, you do not need to include the variable names. Whether it was called “estgest” or “ceg” or “gestest” is not important to the reader. On this page, you define the variable chosen as being a composite of LMP, first exam, etc, and it was consistent with the clinical estimate. But on page 12, you state that the clinical estimate was used. Which is it? Was the variable chosen actually the clinical estimate, or was it something different that was consistent with the clinical estimate. Again, in the discussion, the variable names are unimportant.
- page 8, added line beginning, “To account for this, we have added an additional analysis in a way to demonstrate the maximum impact that multiple births to a single woman would have had on our study.” The reader should be able to understand what this “additional analysis” was, not just that there was one. In the results you mention a variance inflation factor, but how did you use it. You describe this better in the response to my comments. Perhaps you could take a succinct portion of that to describe how the VIF was used (and do this in the methods section).
- page 8, change multivariate analysis to multivariable
- table 1, although the editorial process will pick this up, only need 2 decimal places for the OR

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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