Reviewer's report

Title: A Longitudinal Study of Maternal Prenatal Quality of Life: Can It Predict Preterm Birth and Low Birthweight?

Version: 2 Date: 27 October 2012

Reviewer: Edwin van Teijlingen

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A Longitudinal Study of Maternal Prenatal Quality of Life: Can It Predict Preterm Birth and Low Birthweight?

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Question is well defined and as the authors state is it a well researched area to which this study adds some new observations / findings in terms of predictive factors.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The methods appear to be appropriate for the study. The authors highlight in the limitations that their study population is from only one hospital which may mean a biased sample by the nature of the hospital's catchment area. I would have expected a reference to the difficult issue of translation on page 6. The issue of translation is stated a fact, the process of translation is not straight forward. Also state what the original language was the language into which the questionairte was translated, also what was the quality control of the translation (back-translated?, more than one independent translation, etc.?) Kirkpatrick, P., van Teijlingen E. (2009) Lost in Translation: Reflecting on a Model to Reduce Translation and Interpretation Bias, The Open Nursing Journal, 3(8): 25-32 web address: www.bentham.org/open/tonursj/openaccess2.htm

The setting and sample repeat each other but the sample claims 'pregnant women in Taiwan' whilst the setting is more limited to one hospital in southern Taiwan. The sample should perhaps say 'pregnant women in the city of xxxx, Taiwan'.

Page seven has a typo if 265 women were invited and 56 refused only 209 completed not 211.

3. Are the data sound?
Data appear sound, but note I am not a statistician.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes, appropriate ethical approval was sought and granted.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported
by the data?

Yes, Discussion is clear and relatively straight forward. I’m not so sure about the conclusion as highlighted in the Abstract that: “Interventions can be planned and implemented at early pregnancy to prevent …..” This study is an epidemiological study not an intervention study so I would not put recommendations about interventions in the Abstract.

The first paragraph of the Discussion on page 11 is repeat of the preceding text and not really Discussion material

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Yes, see comments above.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Paper is well references with papers from a good range of sources, need two or three more references to ‘Chinese culture of month’ and methods papers on issues around translation in research.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Some people don’t like questions in the title of a journal article. I think the Abstract should make that this paper is based on a convenience sample of one hospital only.

9. Is the writing acceptable?
Writing is acceptable, although I would try to avoid colloquialisms such as ‘in fact’, these are unnecessary phrases, see page 11 and page 15.

- Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

• Abstract should make that this paper is based on a convenience sample of one hospital only.

• The use the verb ‘perceive’ in a odd way, for example, they state “participants perceived poorer physical health at T2 and T3;” AND “the women in this study did not perceive a high level of QoL”, etc. I think throughout the paper the authors say that the women in their study/ the study participants perceived they had something, that they perceived something to be, not that they perceived something “participants perceived they had poorer physical health at T2 and T3;” AND “the women in this study did not perceive they had a high level of QoL”,

• This study is an epidemiological study not an intervention study so I would not put recommendations about interventions in the Abstract.

• Page 3 last paragraph starts with the sentence “Among the few published studies that …” this sentences needs at least two references at the end of the sentence to support this claim.

• The authors use UK English apart from occasionally USA English, e.g. page 4 ‘behavior’ instead of behaviour and page 6 ‘program’ instead of programme.
• Page 9 odd grammar in the phrase ‘were mentally and generally healthier’, I know what you mean but does not read as grammatically correct.

• In the text numbers smaller than 11 should be in words, especially on page 12 “At one month ..” and “at two-months postpartum”.

• Page 13 last paragraph on “traditional Chinese cultural …” needs a reference to an anthropological text on this phenomenon.

• References relating to book and reports need place of publication, e.g. Ref. 2

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

**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 I have no competing interests