Reviewer's report

Title: Racial and ethnic differences in primary, unscheduled cesarean deliveries among low-risk primiparous women at an academic medical center: a descriptive, retrospective cohort study

Version: 2 Date: 2 July 2013

Reviewer: Charles Algert

Reviewer's report:

The study is clearly presented, and has some interesting results about the indication/stage at which caesarean section was performed. The findings about ethnic differences may have limited generalisability, as the authors acknowledge, since this is a single hospital study.

Major compulsory revisions

None.

Minor essential revisions

1. Methods first paragraph should state “Only nulliparous women WHO LABORED OR ATTEMPTED LABOR at term (37-41 weeks) with singleton...were included.”

2. Should be a statement as to whether patients were predominantly public, all public, or a mix of public and private.

3. In the second paragraph of the Results, two sentences report adjusted odds ratios as equating to specific higher “rates” of primary CS. These two sentences are incorrect. The logistic regression model produces an odds ratio (OR), not a rate ratio (RR). The OR is only a good approximation for the RR when the outcome is rare, or at least uncommon, say <10% event rate. The CS rate is 17% so the OR cannot be used to approximate the RR. An aOR=1.49 means the odds of CS are 49% higher but this is not the same as a CS rate 49% higher. The two sentences that make the specific claims about higher rates should be removed.

Discretionary revisions

1. It would increase the interest of the paper if the authors could add whether there was any trend in the CS rate in their low risk study population over the six years. This could be done by a simple chi square test for trend in the proportion who got a CS each year. IF there was a trend, it might also be worthwhile doing a trend test on one or more of the indication categories.

2. A reader who just looks at the tables will see “CD” and think that it includes all caesarean sections. The authors could consider changing this to “ICD” (intrapartum caesarean delivery) in Tables 1 and 2, to keep it clear in readers’ minds.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests.