Reviewer's report

Title: Partner support in a cohort of African American families and its influence on pregnancy outcomes and prenatal health behaviors

Version: 1 Date: 29 May 2013

Reviewer: Mahmooda Khaliq

Reviewer's report:

The article looked at partner involvement, defined by relationship type and involvement as reported by mother, to discover impact on pregnancy outcomes (i.e., preterm birth, low birth weight).

Abstract:
The abstract is well written. It provides the research question at the beginning and builds on it through each of the sections of the abstract.

Introduction:
The introduction does a great job of presenting existing research and brings up issues of contention. In addition, it builds up to the research questions and also provides an overview of research implications.

Minor Essential Revision: How come “Black” is capitalized in the writing, whereas “white” is not capitalized? I am uncertain about the rationale and wanted to bring this to your attention.

Methods:
A very detailed methods section with most questions addressed. Thank you for providing the psychometric properties for the scales. Additionally, I liked the explanation defining the non-responders.

Discretionary Revision: I would add a sentence indicating why prevalence ratio was selected over Odds Ratio. A reference to the commonality of the outcome, etc... could be used as an explanation.

Minor Essential Revision: Could you give an explanation for the range of the “Family Resource Scale,” since I am unfamiliar I have no idea how to make sense of the number given in table 1.

Results/Discussion:
Both sections were well developed and provided the necessary information. They presented the information, gave an explanation, addressed strengths and limitations, gave implications and the next steps for the study.

Minor Essential Revision:
For the first research question on relationship type – I would ask that the PR along with the CI are provided in the sentence. This was done for partner support but not for the relationship status. In this way, one does not have to refer to the table but has it in front of them. You may want to consider the same for some of the other variables.

Table 1:
Minor Essential Revision:
You may want to make a reference to the significant p-values (i.e. put an asterisk next to the significant ones and then put a footnote indicating what the asterisk signifies.)

Table 2:
Minor Essential Revision: In the title, I do not believe you need “selected” before pregnancy

Figure 1:
Discretionary Revision:
In my opinion this figure does not add value to the manuscript.

Overall, the authors did a great job of setting up the research question and providing the results and discussion. One of the strengths of this paper is how the authors situate the research within the context of current and future research. It is done in such a fashion that I have comprehensive overview of the field without having to dig out the information.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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