Title: A mixed methods evaluation of peer support in Bristol, UK: mothers', midwives' and peer supporters’ views and the effects on breastfeeding.

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews:

Response to reviewers' reports. August 2013.

Reviewer: Virginia Schmied.

Qualitative data analysis details.

I have rewritten the paragraph about the analysis of the interviews and added another reference:

‘All the interviews and the focus group were digitally recorded, transcribed, anonymised and checked for accuracy before analysis. Thematic analysis using an inductive approach [23] was used to scrutinise the data to identify and analyse patterns across the dataset and this process was led by the main researcher. Following repeated reading of the transcripts, codes were generated and built into themes and sub-themes [24]. Final themes were discussed and refined within the evaluation team to achieve a coding consensus and ensure robust analysis.’

This is followed by the description of the mixed methods approach to integrating the interviews and focus group findings.

Reviewer: Judith Myers.

1. The concept of 'usual care' is still not clear for the reader. I assume this means the absence of peer-support services?, but assume that other breastfeeding support and promotion activities are present. Similarly it is not clear if the terms 'targeted support', 'lay support', 'extra support' used throughout the paper are interchangeable with the term 'peer support'. This confusion may be easily and readily avoided if definitions were provided, or consistent terms used.

I have clarified these terms in the background as follows (changes are mostly in the brackets/parentheses):

‘A systematic review of international studies of breastfeeding interventions in primary care reported that they are more effective than usual care (without such interventions) in increasing short and long term breastfeeding rates [1]. Interventions that combined pre- and postnatal components had a larger effect than either alone, and those that included lay support (such as peer support) in a
multicomponent intervention may be more beneficial. A Cochrane systematic review of the effectiveness of breastfeeding support concluded that all forms of extra support (from trained peers or professionals) showed an increase in the length of time women continued to breastfeed;

2. Context section: 'MSW' please introduce this term. This has been spelt out.

3. Please check grammar and wording in some sections of the discussion. This has been done and ‘given’ was deleted from the sentence identified.

4. Conclusion. Do you have any recommendations? Does the program continue? The following sentence has been added:
‘This service continues to be offered in Bristol, but funding has to be secured on an annual basis and competes with other public health priorities’.