Reviewer's report

Title: Perspectives on weight gain and lifestyle practices during pregnancy among women with a history of macrosomia: a qualitative study

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Reviewer: Joanne Harrold

Reviewer's report:

Given the potential for reoccurrence of newborn macrosomia and the close relationship between this condition and maternal weight gain in pregnancy, this study is appropriately orientated to a clear and notable gap in the literature. The manuscript is generally well written and the background literature review builds a case for the study. However, as presented, the question posed by the authors requires further definition. Given the specific population recruited it would be anticipated that interview schedules would be designed to tease out how participant’s perspectives reflect their specific situation i.e. how these perspectives were altered by their experience of giving birth to macrosomic infants, if at all. However, as reported it would suggest this wasn’t the case with just their perspectives about weight and lifestyle in second pregnancies in general being discussed. If so, this is disappointing as an opportunity to derive input from a population that may require specific support and prenatal advice has been missed.

Discretionary Revisions:

1. The flow of the manuscript is inhibited by the quotes inserted throughout the text. Generating a summary table of themes with representative quotes may aid this aspect. The themes however are clearly defined and do appear to be appropriate for the quotes selected.

2. Are names associated with quotes necessary/relevant? More of a concern is whether participants consented to the use of names?

Minor Essential Recommendations:

3. Although largely correct the title should be amended slightly to reflect the focus on an Irish population, which impacts on the generalizability of results. Although four of the women were born outside Ireland, it is assumed their prenatal and antenatal care was provided by the same services and as such they are likely to have been exposed to the same information/advice. The issue of generalizability should also be briefly addressed in the discussion as a potential limitation.

4. To put the findings of the study into context it would be valuable to include a brief insight into the nature of weight gain/body weight advice that is routinely factored into prenatal care in Ireland and whether specific additional advice is offered to mothers who have previously given birth to macrosomic infants.
Major Compulsory Revisions:

5. The methods are appropriate and in particular the steps taken to address the trustworthiness and reliability of data coding are well described. However, it is essential that at least a sample of the interview questions is provided in the methods section of the manuscript to allow their focus to be considered. It is difficult to determine from the results as published whether these questions were specifically tailored to examine the relationship between weight gain, lifestyle and macrosomia or whether they were more generic questions relating to weight gain and lifestyle questions that simply relied on this specific population to hopefully present a unique perspective.

6. In relation to the above comment, whilst the abstract and conclusion adequately summarise the study data as presented, there is no attempt to relate findings to the specific characteristic of this recruitment group.

7. Given that maternal pre-pregnancy weight and excessive weight-gain during pregnancy are significant risk factors for newborn macrosomia, it is unclear why recruitment was based on BMI measured in the first trimester of the second pregnancy. At minimum the rationale behind this approach requires justification. If data on pregnancy weight gain is available for the study population it would be interesting to examine distribution of the sample between high weight gainers and low/normal weight gainers and determine whether any differences in themes arise as a result of this division. This approach could prove very informative in terms of future impact on prenatal care and weight gain advice.

8. The weakness of timing of interview (6 months post birth) is briefly acknowledged at the end of the document along with reference to Githens et al., 1993 which suggests that the delay shouldn't have a major impact on recall. However, there are aspects of the Githens paper which may not support this view. For example, of maternal risk factors the greatest error was with regard to maternal weight gain. Also, the article states that recall of aspects of prenatal treatment were considerably poorer. Further details of the Githens paper should be provided rather than the simple statement inserted at the end of the document.

This manuscript has the potential to be a valuable addition to existing literature. The proposed amendments will build upon the sound rational for conducting the study and the well defined methodology utilised, by highlighting the unique aspects of the work which set it apart from previous publications.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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.