Reviewer’s report

Title: How Effective are the Components of Active Management of the Third Stage of Labor?

Version: 1 Date: 19 October 2012

Reviewer: diane farrar

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript is well written and generally provides a clear account of the research undertaken, however there are a few points I would like to raise

Major revisions

1. The authors suggest the components of active management include PPH, prophylactic uterotonic and uterine massage, however guidelines and current practise in several countries including the UK includes controlled cord traction (either early or delayed) and it does not include uterine massage. This should be acknowledged and discussed


2. The authors do not comment on the differences in timing of cord clamping and the potential to effect pph (as well as infant wellbeing) until the discussion, although data are limited this should be mentioned in the introduction and commented on further in the discussion as there are differences between and within countries and it is topical and debated in most literature related to the third stage

3. The recent Cochrane review Oladapo OT, Okusanya BO, Abalos E. Intramuscular versus intravenous prophylactic oxytocin for the third stage of labour. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2012, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD009332. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD009332.pub2. should be cited when referring to effectiveness of oxytocin by route of administration and also Mshweshwe N, Hofmeyr G, Gülmezoglu A. Controlled cord traction for the third stage of labour. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2009Issue 4. Art. No.: CD008020. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD008020. when referring to literature
on CCT

4. In the background section third paragraph it would be preferable to clarify how ‘large’ the RCT was the WHO conducted and what is meant by ‘very little effect’. In the fifth paragraph the authors say staff were not blinded which of course they couldn’t have been as they were providing the intervention. ........... were the assessors of the outcomes blinded though? At the end of the sixth paragraph the authors suggest that early clamping is no longer recommended, however this is not the case for all countries including the UK and although there is limited evidence of benefit for preterm and term infants there is also the risk of increased jaundice in term infants. There is limited evidence of benefit from delayed cord clamping because it increases placental transfusion volume, but this is not the same as harm to infants or mothers from early cord clamping, their sentence needs revising to reflect this

5. Under the methods section if the methods of the data collection have been reported elsewhere and a reference given there is no need to go on and describe it the section from ‘The trials to regimen’ should be removed

6. The description of blood loss measurement needs to be moved to where it’s first described in paragraph 2 of methods also in the discussion comment should be made on the accuracy of this method of assessment

7. Results section paragraph 6 I’m not sure where the OR=1.3 95, CI 0.43-2.96 came from shouldn’t it be 0.28 (0.14-0.55) ? or do they mean against IM oxytocin and CCT?

Minor revisions

It would be useful to understand what is meant by hospital practice in the different countries or is this described elsewhere

BMC reviewer questions. Please see above comments

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   Yes

3. Are the data sound?
   Yes they seem to be, though it would be good to have a little background on the sites the studies were conducted in

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes

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

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Yes, but I think more needs to be said on the use of single centre sites that are familiar with certain practices ie active or physiological management of the 3rd stage and the generalizability of results to the general population, the authors do touch on this but it needs to be more explicit

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes

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 declare that I have no competing interests