Reviewer’s report

Title: Factors affecting the use of prenatal care by non-western women in industrialized western countries: a systematic review

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Reviewer: Sarah Fredsted Villadsen

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Review for BMC pregnancy and childbirth

This is a literature review of predominantly qualitative studies. It gives overview and is synthesized against a conceptual framework that makes the conclusions a valuable contribution to the field. It is a paper of importance in its field and the overview of in-depth perspectives of migrant women on antenatal care and can contribute to development of preventive strategies. However, the structure of the paper could be considerably improved and make the message more analytic and clearer. Further, the authors should be careful when conclusions are made across qualitative studies because they are context specific, and make sure that the conclusions are at the right inference level.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The manuscript could be improved considerably by change of structure:
   a. Put the listing and describing parts of the results in tables
      i. Include the overview of the study characteristics as a table and omit a lot of the text in the section under the headline: Characteristics of the included studies. Then the table needs some revision, I suggest to leave out information on age and parity, but include information on the quality score/assessment
   b. The conceptual framework needs to be better explained as it plays a central role for the analysis/synthesis and is not discussed in sufficient details in the discussion. To me it is surprising and a limitation that cultural characteristics, position in host country, and social network are considered individual factors and not social factors.

2. In the results section when findings from the articles included are discussed I think restructuring would add to the overview: present only the sum of the important themes and drop to list the studies as under the title Barriers.... Paragraph five: migration-related characteristics impeding prenatal care utilization were described in one quantitative study, seven qualitative studies and....

3. Try to rewrite the results so that the content is more integrated and analytic, now it is rather long and descriptive. All factors and the references are in table 1, therefore I suggest shortening down the result section and allowing for a longer discussion of the findings and comparability. Any contrasts between different
countries of origin (as has been documented in terms of infant health and mortality – should be followed up in the discussion)? Between descendants and migrants? Quantitative and qualitative studies?

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the objectives (last paragraph of the introduction): Details on how medical care and prenatal classes are defined as two different outcomes are needed. Further, I suggest including: development of a model for understanding facilitating and impeding factors for migrant women’s use of prenatal care as part of the objectives of the study as this is a central part of the conclusions.

2. The mixed methods appraisal tool: used to evaluate the quality of the studies, but the quality of the studies not considered in the overall conclusions?

3. Central to the conceptual framework is the distinguishing between individual and health system factors, however they are not used in Table 1, where the framework is applied. Further, barriers and facilitators not clearly defined according to the conceptual framework.

4. The table text in Table 1 is not descriptive.

Discretionary Revisions

1. In general the terminology is a little confusing as there are many factors/characteristics/categories and they are not always used in a clear way for example first line in paragraph one under the title barriers to prenatal care utilization.

2. Ethnic minority was found to be one of the determinants at page 18, should be rewritten: to be a migrant/ non-western origin or

3. Working mechanisms should only be mechanisms page 19

4. Transfer of social inequality from the native country to the new country…. This sentence is not clear

5. Insensitive behavior (reference 26 Reitmanova et al) is repeated p 12 and p 15.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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