Reviewer’s report

Title: Open access intrapartum CTG database

Version: 1 Date: 28 August 2013

Reviewer: Janusz Jezewski

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

I have not any major revisions. The paper is sound and well-written. In my opinion this is an important contribution to the area of fetal state assessment. Especially as there are no databases on Physionet containing fetal heart rate signals with interpretation. Last year we provided a database with simultaneously recorded abdominal and direct fetal electrocardiograms (http://physionet.org/physiobank/database/adfecgdb/).

Minor Essential Revisions

1. From the future database end user point of view some information for interpretation of categorical data is missing (e.g. “Sex”: does number 1 correspond to male or female?; also “Presentation” – which number stands for occipital or breech?). Although most of this information can be deduced reading the paper, it might be helpful for the user to gather all descriptions of parameters provided in header files in one list. It could be included as an additional table in the paper, or provided as a text-file along with data files.

2. In Table 1, in row „Siira et al. 2005”, column „time to delivery” is a mark of reference (4) for which the footnote is missing. The same situation occurs in row „Jezewski et al. 2010”, column „# total cases”.

3. In Table 6 – the number of cases for which the Apgar score in 5th minute was pathological is higher in the set {pH>7.25}, than in set {pH>7.15} – even though the first one is a subset of the second.

Discretionary Revisions

1. You could consider providing data files additionally in EDF format. It is convenient for users as there are some freeware viewers available, and thus – one is not required to install WFDB toolbox, not even to use Matlab environment.

2. Figure 2 could be more clear if plotted without zero-values in FHR signal. In current form the concentration of vertical lines hinders the assessment of signal shape. A simple Matlab formula aFhr( aFhr<30 ) = NaN should work, making the marker of second-stage of labour more visible as well.

3. On page 4 two our papers (namely: [25] Jezewski et al. and [26] Czabanski et al.) are cited as being based on the same database. In fact these were two different databases, gathered from different hospitals. As the datasets were not uniform (description and parameters provided differed according to the local
hospital practice) they could not be combined together.

4. Third and the largest database was recently prepared, with 2124 recordings from 333 patients. A paper (in English) making use of this dataset was published in journal “Ginekologia Polska”:


If the authors are still interested in this subject I can provide the full text of this paper.

5. The autocorrelation function application (window size, measurement repetition, etc.) is discussed in more details in another paper, which in my opinion is more easily accessible for readers as it was published in open access journal (one of BioMed Central journals).

Please consider replacing the citation: [60] Roj D. et al., “The influence of window size…”, with the following one:


**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest 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.