Reviewer's report

Title: The paradox of classification of prolonged labour

Version: 1 Date: 29 November 2013

Reviewer: Susan McDonald

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Major Compulsory Revisions

There needs to be some clarification in a number of areas. It was unclear what the purpose of the research was in terms of whether it was the prolonged labour that was the point of dissatisfaction, whether it was that oxytocin augmentation use was the issue or the diagnostic categorisation and the use of oxytocin augmentation in the labours of women who did not have a diagnosis of prolonged labour. The results of the study are in keeping with other research conducted in the topic. That is, women who have a prolonged labour are are more at risk of increased intervention (which may be entirely appropriate for a range of obstetric reasons) and they are usually less satisfied with care/ or outcome (also for a range of reasons... loss of their expectations for the birth, more pain that anticipated, loss of control of their birth experience, natural anxiety of the unfamiliar experience of labour and birth) It is also consistent for primiparous women to have a higher rate of prolonged labour. There is reference to possible misuse of oxytocin in labour in the absence of prolonged labour. This needs to be explored more, as augmentation with oxytocin can be for a wide range of reasons other than correction of prolonged labour. So you would need to identify the reason for its use to be able to discuss its appropriate application or not.

In terms of the survey results:

A fairly low percentages of women related their negative feelings toward the mode of birth or length of labour per se and the questionnaire does not investigate women's views of the use of oxytocin augmentation as a cause or contributor to a negative birth experience.

Would you be able to identify from your 2 month survey, the actual reasons women gave as being the greatest contributing factor for their dissatisfaction?

Also, as the survey was undertaken at 2 months post birth, did you aske women whether they had engaged in any debriefing, either formally or informally regarding their birth experiences and whether this may have affected their responses (more positively or negatively)?

Potentially a good paper if the questions above could be considered

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

**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'