Reviewer’s report

Title: Struggling to survive for the sake of the unborn baby: a grounded theory model of exposure to intimate partner violence during pregnancy

Version: 2 Date: 19 June 2014

Reviewer: Abigail Hatcher

Reviewer’s report:

This represents important, qualitative work in an under-explored field. The authors do a nice job of synthesizing the research findings. Moreover the writing is articulate and clear. However, there are several smaller revisions that would strengthen the manuscript and prepare it for publication.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Results: Kindly attribute all quotes to a particular woman (using pseudonyms and/or basic demographic description). For example, you might write a direct quote followed by:
   - Mathilde, 24 years old, mother of 2
2. The Results would be greatly improved were additional direct quotes used. This highlights the voices of participants and illustrates the themes nicely.
3. Please explain the terms “exposed to mastery” and “destructive togetherness” as these are somewhat confusing phrases for a lay reader.
4. Discussion: on page 16, rather than using the terms “sub-core” and “core”, could the authors rather describe their analytical conclusions using layman’s terms? What do these findings tell us practically and theoretically about IPV in pregnancy?

Minor Essential Revisions

5. Intro: on page 3, “a Swedish interview study” should be changed to “a Swedish qualitative study”
6. The authors might consider starting a new paragraph at the phrase starting, “However, lack of consensus…”
7. Ethical Considerations: Should be “verbal consent,” not “oral consent”
8. Results: Kindly indent any quote over 40 words (I believe that is the BMC Pregnancy requirement, but may be mistaken).

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