Author's response to reviews

Title: Prevalence and evolution of intimate partner violence before and during pregnancy: a cross-sectional study

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Version: 3 Date: 20 July 2014

Author's response to reviews: see over
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Prof Hundley and Mr. Trinidad  
Editors  
BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth

July 18th, 2014

Dear editor and reviewers,

Thank you for the thorough reviews, comments and suggestions. We have attempted to clarify all matters addressed and revised the manuscript in response to the thoughtful critiques below. All of the comments that required answering are copied below with our response immediately following in blue. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

An-Sofie Van Parys,  
PhD-student Ghent University

Reviewer Kathleen Baird

“Most of the data appears to have been collected at a gestational age of 21 weeks, however, violence in pregnancy can begin after this gestation, and this may account for the lower recording rate of violence during pregnancy in the study. The lower recording rates may also be attributed to the 25% of women who did not complete the survey.”  
These suggestions were added as additional hypotheses to the discussion.

“page 2 lines 29/30 the sentence is unclear and requires rewriting I feel word bigger is not appropriate – consider using ‘greater”  
This was adapted.
“no need for the word ‘as’ also line 26 there are words missing from this sentence inserting the word ‘other’ into the sentence will improve the syntax.”
Adaptations are made.

Page 3 line 51, add ‘s’ to the word behaviour.
Done.

Page 3 line 62 I would rewrite the variations of violence starting for instance instead of using the term ‘starting up’ consider commencement of violence, continuation of violence instead of violence continuing; and termination of violence instead of violence ceasing.
This was adapted.

Page 5 line 94 authors reference 24, is cited as a study from Australia yet reference 24 is a study from Brazil?
We inserted the correct reference.

Also moves from 3rd person to 1st person on page 5. Instead of we consider using ‘this paper will…..’
This was changed according to your suggestion.

In the main this paper is well written and worthy of publication, however, there is a lot of data reported in the paper. Perhaps the authors should consider making this one paper into two separate papers, as some of the findings are worthy of a deeper discussion and comparison with other literature.
We agree that there is a lot of data, but we fear that dividing the results in two papers will have a negative impact on the coherence of the current message we would like to bring.

Reviewer Denise Lawler
1. On page 1 lines 1-2:
Title – appropriate but I suggest that the country i.e. Belgium be included.
We did not add the country to the title, to increase the chance that people not really interested in the specifics of the Belgian situation, will also read the paper.

2. On page 1 lines 6-9:
Abstract – Background could be expanded a little more to include a definition of IPV
Due to word count limitations in the abstract, we chose not to include the definition in the abstract. Readers will find the definition in the first paragraph of the introduction.
and I suggest that you add the content in red to provide clarity to the following sentence: Describing the extent and the evolution of IPV (suggest that before and after pregnancy be inserted here if appropriate)...is a crucial step...health impact (of what and when?).
Since we already used before and during pregnancy in the sentence above, we think that the word ‘evolution’ sufficiently incorporates the meaning of before and during pregnancy. We added ‘to reduce the health impact of IPV’.
3. On page 2 lines 25 -26:Suggest add words as follows: risk factors identified after...and using another language other than Dutch.
Adaptations were made.

4. On page 3: Line 49-53: suggest reword this section – confusing in current format. Please provide full title of CDC before using abbreviation.
Adaptations were made.

Line 54-56: Who’s needs are the authors referring to here?
The needs of both (future) parents, this was added.

Line 56: Research – in relation to what?
Research on this matter, referring to the sentence before, this was adapted.

Line 60-61 – I would suggest that the mechanisms and determinants influencing interaction of IPV and pregnancy is described in the research I suggest that this statement be clarified maybe I have misinterpreted the content.5.
Explaining these mechanisms and determinants would lead us too far and falls out of the scope of this paper.

On page 4:Line 71 need to add one (or whatever the number is) hundred... Published from what domains e.g. sociological, psychological, feminist, medical?
We added your suggestion.

Lines 79-83 quite a lot of content here about the prevalence of IPV – I suggest that this be presented in a table, this format would ensure the difference is captured at a glance
We opted to only present own data in tables, to avoid confusion.

6. On page 6: Lines 132-134 need formatting
We agree that this lay-out needs to be adapted, and forward this remark to the production team.

7. On page 7:Lines 150-157 – providing a snapshot of the questions from the questionnaire in a Figure might cover the content in a more visually appealing way.
The lines you’re referring to actually are a snapshot or a summary of the questions used. Providing a full figure of all violence questions would take a lot of place since a number of questions were asked several times linked to the different time periods (12 months before and during pregnancy).

8. On page 8: Lines 173-182 – providing a snapshot of the questions from the questionnaire in a Figure might cover the content in a more visually appealing way.
Cf. supra.

Line 191 – grammar suggest – …on the 7 questions above…
Adapted.

9. Page 9: Line 209 – suggest that the subheading data analysis be used
Done.
10. Page 10: Line 248 – suggest that subheading be expanded – Perpetrator of IPV before and during pregnancy
This was changed according to your suggestion.

11. Page 20: In acknowledgement section should caps be used with the personal titles and dr deleted e.g. Prof Olivier Degomme etc.
Done.