Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 18 June 2014

Reviewer: Denise Lawler

Reviewer's report:

Overall this is a well constructed article where the question and objective posed by the authors are well defined. The title and abstract accurately convey what the study has found. The methods used to conduct the research are described. The data presented seems reasonable. The manuscript adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition. The discussion and conclusions are well balanced and are adequately supported by the data. The findings are positioned within extant literature on the prevalence of IPV. The limitations are clearly and honestly stated. The authors acknowledge the work is part of a larger RCT.

The writing and formatting are generally acceptable but I suggest the following, all are Minor Essential Revisions:

1. On page 1 lines 1-2:
   Title – appropriate but I suggest that the country i.e. Belgium be included.

2. On page 1 lines 6-9:
   Abstract – Background could be expanded a little more to include a definition of IPV 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?). Objective is clear. In methods could describe method/type of analysis conducted.

3. On page 2 lines 25-26:
   Suggest add words as follows: risk factors identified after...and using another language other than Dutch

4. On page 3:
   Line 49-53: suggest reword this section – confusing in current format. Please provide full title of CDC before using abbreviation.
   Line 54-56: Who's needs are the authors referring to here?
   Line 56: Research – in relation to what?
   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. 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?
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

6. On page 6:
Lines 132-134 need formatting

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.

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

9. Page 9:
Line 209 – suggest that the subheading data analysis be used

10. Page 10:
Line 248 – suggest that subheading be expanded – Perpetrator of IPV before and during pregnancy

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

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests