Reviewer’s report

Title: Internet information on birth options after caesarean compared to the RCOG patient information leaflet; A web survey

Version: Date: 15 February 2014

Reviewer: Carina Sparud-Lundin

Reviewer’s report:

Thanks for the opportunity to review this interesting manuscript. The paper is an unusual, somewhat novel approach to scrutinize a contemporary phenomenon. The authors attempt to critically analyze the quality of internet information on birth options after caesarean contribute knowledge about the access to evidence-based information which can be crucial for women’s health care decisions.

The title and abstract accurately convey the content of the paper. Two well defined questions are posed and answered within the manuscript. The methods used are creative but cannot be considered as “mainstream” which makes it more difficult to assess their appropriateness. However, the authors describe the steps undertaken to develop the quality criterions and motivates choice of website characteristics. With one exception, limitations are stated and discussed.

Discretionary Revisions

In table 2, are the websites ranked in relation to how many times they were counted (i.e. Website nr 1 was counted most times)? It is not explicitly described in the text.

I think it would be of interest to also report the scoring assessment of each website, added as a column in table 2. Also the assessment of website characteristics could be included in the table as a separate column.

Compare with how systematic reviews report the publication, characteristics and quality assessment within the same table.

Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract: Explain VBAC and ERCS the first time they occur in the Method section.

Result section in the abstract and in the manuscript (p 9): Be consistent when reporting SD (%)

Box 1: Is the legend really accurate? Isn’t it website quality characteristics? It is easier for the reader if you use the same terms.

Major Compulsory Revisions (}
The reason to select the top five websites as a subgroup is unclear and need to be discussed. One could suspect that it was a measure undertaken to get a more interesting result as no statistical significant difference was found in the whole group of websites (n=48). I recommend the authors to argue for this decision as it seems somewhat arbitrary.

Report of the scores for the top five websites exclusively is missing. If selecting those for sub group analysis it is of interest to know their quality.

In the Discussion (p 13) it is mentioned that the top ten websites scored favourably in comparison to the golden standard- isn’t this new information and is it really accurate to report on this in the Discussion instead of the Result section. However, if my previous recommendation is followed (i.e. include more information in table 2) it would be possible to keep this argumentation.

In summary, I do believe that the research constitutes a useful contribution to the field of exploring access to evidence-based information. New kinds of research areas require creative ways of producing scientific knowledge.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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