Reviewer's report

Title: Talcum Powder or Aqueous Gel to Aid External Cephalic Version: A Randomised Controlled Trial

Version: 1 Date: 8 November 2013

Reviewer: Natasha Nassar

Reviewer's report:

This is a useful study comparing use of talcum powder versus aqueous gel to help facilitate external cephalic version (ECV). The primary outcome was maternal self-reported procedure-related pain and success rate. However, the study was powered on the former outcome and there was insufficient power to conclusively determine success rate.

There are no major issues with this study, but further details regarding rationale for analyses and approaches need to be provided.

1. Line 94-99: can authors provide more detail about who conducted the randomisation- was this done remotely from the person undertaking ECV
2. Line 133: is the primary outcome measure of VRNS been validated? Has it been used in previous studies? How reproducible and repeatable are results?
3. Line 146-155: given there were 2 primary outcomes why wasn’t study also powered for ECV success rate; and then higher estimate of sample size chosen?
4. Line 158: need to define ‘per protocol’ analysis.
5. Line 158: why wasn’t intention to treat analysis performed?
6. Line 158-164: there is insufficient detail related to the various analyses conducted. More information about each component of the analysis needs to be provided. For example, how and what associations were assessed, and why (what outcomes and what predictors) and how was the multivariable analysis conducted?
7. Line 187- why weren’t final per protocol results presented, taking into account crossovers?
8. Line 197-199: Sentence related to predictors of ECV success does not belong in results and should be moved to introduction with more information provided.
9. Line 199-203: rationale for this analysis needs to be provided in the analysis section of methods
10. Line 203: Revise ‘take up’ to ‘rate’
11. Line 206: why weren’t intention to treat results presented?
12. Line 207-213: this section belongs in the discussion
13. Line 216-218: move this sentence to discussion
14. Line 218-219: what harms were assessed- need to be described in methods.
15. Line 218-219: More information on harms should be provided in introduction
16. Line 239: need to address imprecision of this result
17. Line 240: need to address that in your trial all women received a beta-mimetic and what the impact of this has on your results
18. Line 251-254: rationale as to why study wasn’t powered for ECV success given it was also a primary outcome should be provided.
19. Table 1: footnote needs to be deleted and details related to data expressed needs to be moved to column titles of table so reader understands units presented
20. Table 1: delete footnote related to ‘Analysis….’
21. Table 1: footnote: delete repeated word ‘sound’
22. Table 2: Check numbers and percentage for caesarean delivery
23. Table 2: Which outcome does the RR 2.1 (95%CI 0.4-12) relate to?
24. Table 2: delete first 4 lines of footnote; and add units expressed in titles of table.

Editorial comments
1. Line 54: delete ‘shows that’ and replace with reported
2. Line 64: Replace ‘latterly’ with Recently
3. Line 79: correct consents to consent
4. Line 102: insert ‘out’ after carried
5. Line 104: revise comprise to ‘comprised’
6. Line 105: end sentence at 2-3 minutes. Delete ‘and following which’ and commence new sentence with ‘Fetal presentation…were THEN checked by….’
7. Line 107: replace ‘could’ by ‘was’
8. Line 139: insert ‘collected’ following ‘Secondary outcomes COLLECTED include…’
9. Line 155: delete ‘in a single block’ as it repeats line 96
10. Line 182: delete ‘analyzes’
11. Line 259: replace find with ‘found’
12. Line 262: delete ‘this resulted in the possibility that’ and start sentence with ‘Cross0ver…’ and change ‘might be more’ to ‘was’ and then revise end of sentence to ‘…operators MAY HAVE BEEN more confident with gel’
13. Line 264: revise result to ‘results’ and delete like and replace with ‘such as’
14. Line 265: replace ‘nullity’ with ‘the null’
15. Line 274: replace ‘is’ with ‘was’
**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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