Reviewer’s report

Title: Systematic review of healthcare interventions to improve outcomes of disabled pregnant and postnatal women and their families

Version: 1 Date: 8 November 2013

Reviewer: Monika Mitra

Reviewer’s report:

This paper presents a systematic review of the effectiveness of healthcare interventions to improve outcomes for disabled women during their pregnancy and postnatal periods. This review is the first of its kind to assess the healthcare interventions aimed at pregnant and postnatal disabled women. It highlights the gap in the literature and the dearth of an evidence base of healthcare interventions for disabled women and their families around the time of their pregnancy.

Major compulsory revisions

1. Given the broad research question, in terms of types of disabilities, type of interventions and services, the time periods (antenatal, intrapartum, postnatal periods), and the inclusion of families, partners, and children of the disabled women and health care professionals, the resulting heterogeneity of the three studies is not surprising. This along with other limitations of the review should be noted in the discussion section of the paper.

Minor essential revisions

1. Some of the citations having missing parenthesis in the second paragraph of the “Results of the search.”

2. What was the basis of the inclusion criteria for the “disability” categories in Appendix A? Was it based on the ICF in consultation with the advisory group?

Other revisions

1. Given the general lack of understanding of disability, I would recommend the authors describe the types of disability included in the review protocol in the introduction section. It would be worth noting in the methods section that the authors used a categorical and a functional definition of disability in their search criteria.

2. In addition, the authors should describe the types of intervention included in the protocol and their intention not to focus on the interventions of the underlying health conditions (paragraph 1 of the sub-section Types of intervention). I would suggest including a couple of sentences clarifying this in the last paragraph of the introduction section. Please include appendix B within the narrative of the paper.

3. The authors’ end of the conclusion section with a citation to a population
based maternity survey in the UK that could inform future studies. Please elaborate the “important” findings from this survey and how in combination with the findings from the current paper could inform future research and the development of interventions.

**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 have an NIH grant examining the healthcare experiences of women with physical disabilities during the time of their pregnancy. I am also the co-author of several articles on the health and well-being of women with disabilities during the time of pregnancy. Otherwise I have no competing interests.