Author's response to reviews

Title: Glycosylated haemoglobin and adverse pregnancy outcomes in type 1 and type 2 diabetes mellitus: Systematic review of observational studies

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Version: 3 Date: 14 September 2006

Author's response to reviews: see over
13th September 2006

Dr Le,
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Dear Dr Le,

Re: MS – 1606448450984135: Glycated haemoglobin and adverse pregnancy outcomes in type 1 and type 2 diabetes mellitus: Systematic review of observational studies.

Thank you for your e-mail of 24th August regarding reviewers comments for the above paper. We are grateful to all the reviewers for their comments which we have taken into account and we welcome the opportunity to improve our paper. The changes we have made are detailed below, and where suggested changes were not made an explanation is given.

Referee 3:
The report from Referee 3 appeared as blank and after contacting the editorial office we have been assured that the referee was satisfied by the revisions and had nothing else to add.

Referee 4:
We thank Referee 4 for the comments regarding our review. In response to the minor essential revisions we have changed the sentence in the last paragraph of page 5 so that it now reads ‘Control data from case-control studies were not used in this review’.

On the last paragraph of page 9 we have reported the number of studies which only reported major congenital malformations and this sentence now reads ‘Six studies only reported major congenital malformations and the pooled estimate was 5.14 (95% CI, 2.94 to 9.01), (Figure 4)’.

We have removed the figures in pages 19 to 26 which were repeats of information from page 32 onwards. The figures have now been uploaded on separate files.

The title of the paper has been changed to ‘Poor glycated haemoglobin control and adverse pregnancy outcomes in type 1 and type 2 diabetes mellitus: Systematic review of observational studies’, following the reviewer’s suggestion.

In response to the discretionary revisions, a sensitivity analysis was performed excluding the largest study and similar results were found. The following sentence has therefore been inserted on paragraph 2 of page 10 ‘Sensitivity analyses, excluding the study with the largest number of participants, [24] produced similar results’.
We have inserted the abbreviation HbA\textsubscript{1c} after the mention of glycated haemoglobin in the Methods section of the Abstract on page 2 and on paragraph 2, page 4 of the Introduction to make this clearer for the readers. We have also changed the use of glycated haemoglobin throughout the paper to read HbA\textsubscript{1c}.

We have now explained which outcomes were reported alongside the number of trials that reported them by changing the sentence in paragraph 3 on page 9 to now read ‘Spontaneous abortions and perinatal mortality were reported in four of the studies, while all other maternal, fetal and neonatal outcomes in Table 3 were reported in only one of the studies’.

On page 13 we have removed the word ‘however’ so the sentence now reads ‘We believe our process of literature identification was comprehensive……..’.

In response to the comments regarding cut-offs of glycated haemoglobin and whether or not it would be appropriate to carry out subgroup analysis using different categories, we have added the following sentence on page 13 ‘For this reason it would have been inappropriate to do a subgroup analysis using different cut-off levels as categories’. We hope this provides a better explanation for readers.

We hope that the changes which have been made are in line with the reviewer’s comments and will allow readers to better understand the content of our review. If you need further clarification of any aspect of the review please do not hesitate to contact Melanie Inkster at m.inkster@chs.dundee.ac.uk.

We look forward to the publication of our paper.

Yours sincerely,

Melanie Inkster
Tom Fahey
Peter Donnan
Graham Leese
Gary Mires
Deirdre Murphy