Reviewer's report

Title: Satisfaction with childbirth in Belgium and the Netherlands

Version: 1 Date: 18 April 2007

Reviewer: Giorgio Bedogni

Reviewer's report:

General

I was asked to review this manuscript as statistical referee.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

P2 L7 “Universal character” is too strong. “The applicability of this model to different countries is explored” may be more correct.

P5 L5 Are Ghent and Tilburg comparable for characteristics other than the number of births?

P5 L12 Please explain how you performed oversampling of home deliveries.

P5 L15 What criteria did you use to select midwifery practices outside Ghent?

P5 L18 If I understand this point correctly, 611 of 833 women who completed an antenatal questionnaire were studied. What was the aim of the antenatal questionnaire for the present study? Did the woman who were followed-up differ from those not followed-up?

P6 L12 It is a pity that registration of women who refused to participate was not performed systematically. This makes generalization of the results less likely. The Authors should consider this point in the discussion.

P7 L7

The Mackey Childbirth Satisfaction Rating Scale is made of 6 dimensions that comprise from 2 to 9 items. Each dimension was used as outcome in 6 linear models. Was the outcome variable normally distributed in all cases? This seems unlikely for the dimensions with few items (2 and 3). If this is not the case, a transformation or a model with ordinal outcomes may be tried. Please, give the number of subjects on whom you performed the reliability study of the scales. Because you use a mixed model, specify how effects were modeled (what fixed? what random?). It is very important that the Authors provide a measure of effect size. What is the variance of each outcome of the Mackey Childbirth Satisfaction Rating Scale explained by covariates?

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

P1 L3 “the determinants have been identified”. Isn’t it better to say “some determinants have been proposed?”

P1 L4 “social psychological”. Is this for “social and psychological determinants”?

P1 L6 Please explain what you mean by integration in “one model”. This is not clear to me.

P1 L7 “Located on a single country”. Isn’t it better to write “focuses on sigle countries”?

P2 L2 lower(ed) as compared to what?

P4 last line: “divergent” needs clarification.
“nobody had a place in mind other than the ones summed up”. This is not surprising because the options included “other” and “I don’t know”. Is it intended that these 2 categories were never chosen?

Wouldn’t the analysis benefit from the inclusion of both the planned and actual place of birth?

What is meant by “no table” in brackets?

Specify in the text that “B” are regression coefficients.

Were these variables normally distributed? If not, mean and SD should not be used to describe them.

I would remove Chronbach’s alphas from tables and discuss them in the text in a paragraph on reliability and consistency of scales. Also specify that the numbers you give in text are alphas since there is no mention to this now.

Values of t are not essential and can be removed from the text.

Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Needs some language corrections before being published

Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

I declare that I have no competing interests