Author's response to reviews

Title: Traditional beliefs and practices in the postpartum period in Fujian Province, China: a qualitative study

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
13 February 2007

The Editor
BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth

Dear Editor,

We send the revised article “Traditional beliefs and practices in the postpartum period in Fujian province, China: a qualitative study”. We have revised the article according to the comments sent by the reviewers on 18 January 2007. The table below details the comments made by the reviewers and our responses to the comments. All the authors have contributed to the revised manuscript.

Responses to reviewers’ comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviewer: Anna-Berit Ransja-Arvidson</th>
<th>Authors response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major compulsory revisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>One paragraph (p 5) is unclear and needs some more explanation. The section starts with; This study explores the ritual from a variety of perspectives ..... (which??) and analyses the degree of adaptation of the practices..... In particular we assess (how?)</td>
<td>We have now clarified this paragraph.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data collection: Semi structured interviews and key informant interviews .....I suggest that the authors give a better explanation and specific example of the content of the interviews, topics/ questions? and where were the interviews held? In homes? or other private locations?</td>
<td>Content of interviews: we have given more details about the content of the interviews. In addition we have referred to table 1 which describes the topics for each type of participant. Location of interviews: we have added a sentence on the locations of the interviews.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis: The data were analysed using a framework approach. Please describe this approach.</td>
<td>We have included a description of the approach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis: The authors identified emerging themes and these themes could be mentioned either in the section Analysis or in the first paragraph of the Results section.</td>
<td>We have included the emerging themes in the first paragraph of the results section.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results: Tradition versus change: Families`...... Is this a theme? (not presented in Table 3)</td>
<td>Yes this is a theme. We have made it more explicit in the results section and abstract. It sets the context for the evaluation of the practices and because of this is different from the other themes in table 3. Table 3 is evaluating the individual practices in relation to western health model.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Results: It seems as if the traditional misconceptions about breastfeeding practices carried the major harmful risks and this information has more or less drown in other</td>
<td>We have highlighted this finding in the conclusion and abstract. We have changed the classification to harmful.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
information in the paper and should be stressed more even in abstract conclusion. It is not potentially harmful but harmful (Table 3).

Results: You have inserted Table 3 in the Discussion. Is it not better placed at the end of Results.

We have moved the table to the end of the results section.

**Minor essential revisions**

<table>
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<td>The numbering of references should be checked and followed according to the journal guidelines.</td>
<td>We have revised the references.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The study is sometimes referred to as descriptive and sometimes as explorative. The study seems to be more explorative</td>
<td>We agree that it is explorative study and have revised the manuscript as necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat more food. Obs the tempus in the text</td>
<td>We have changed the tense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCM=?</td>
<td>I have inserted the full words - Traditional Chinese Medicine and abbreviation (TCM) on page 5.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motherwort=?</td>
<td>We have included an explanatory sentence on page 15 where motherwort is first mentioned.</td>
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</table>

**Reviewer: Debra Creedy**

**Major compulsory revisions**

<table>
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<td>The rationale for the study needs to be strengthened. A paragraph currently appears in the method section, whereas these arguments should be brought forward to the end of the literature review section. The justification for the study appears to be based on the findings of an unpublished Masters dissertation whereas published sources should be used to substantiate the need for the study.</td>
<td>We have revised the literature review / introduction section and moved justification to end of introduction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The manuscript would benefit from editing to remove extraneous information (e.g., detail on procedures used to obtain consent is unnecessary. It could be assumed that ethical procedures were followed as per the Human Research Ethics Committee approval; the 3rd sentence in the data collection section that aims to justify the approach adopted should be deleted).</td>
<td>We have shortened the section on ethical considerations. We have removed the sentence justifying the approach to data collection is removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results - The extent to which health professionals supported or disagreed with a traditional practice should be included in every section of the results.</td>
<td>We have added the health professional viewpoints for each section of the results.</td>
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<td>Results - At times, it would be helpful to identify what is &quot;normal practice&quot; in regards to areas such as perineal hygiene and teeth brushing so that changes to practice in the postpartum are easily identified.</td>
<td>We didn’t ask direct questions about what normal practice was in areas of perineal hygiene, teeth brushing and hygiene. However, women did briefly explain their normal practices on dental and general hygiene and diet which we have now included in the results sections. Unfortunately, they did not explain about perineal hygiene.</td>
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</table>
Revision is required to Tables 1 and 3. Table 1 should be heavily edited to remove extraneous words. E.g., the first 5 lines in column 3 can be deleted. I suggest that Table 3 is extended to provide more information on the rationale for the various practices identified in the study. The phrase "no obvious health effects" is not a rationale.

Table 1: We have edited this table. Table 3: We have amended table 3 and the heading has been changed to: explanation of these effects.

The discussion section requires revision. I suggest rephrasing questions used as subheadings to become statements - e.g., the subheading "why do women follow the ritual?" could become "reasons for ritual adherence".

The subheadings have been changed.

Discussion: New information is provided in this section that has not be raised previously - but needs to be -such as "many members work overseas" (provide some discussion about this in the introduction), and an outline of the socio-economic changes in the region.

We have added a section in the study setting part of the methods section.

The conclusion in regards to the role of practitioners is not substantiated by the data presented in the paper and needs to be reconsidered. This may be a recommendation for future research but is not a conclusion of this study.

We have revised the conclusion.

**Minor essential revisions**

The numbered referencing system is out of sequence and should be revised before publication.

We have revised the references.

Do not use indentation in the Discussion. We have removed the indentation.

Please send all correspondence to Joanna Raven.

Yours sincerely,

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