Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 4 December 2006

Reviewer: Anna-Berit Ransjö-Arvidson

Reviewer’s report:

General
It is a complex and important topic; to find out what can be the meaning of traditional beliefs during the postpartum period. The paper is interesting, important and carefully written but could possibly be shortened a bit.

(I had recently a discussion with a Vietnamese researcher and according to the Vietnamese culture similarly as mentioned in your paper a newly delivered mother should avoid wind, water and fire. Water can enter the body as you also mention a new mother should avoid washing her hair or brush her teeth).

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

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?)

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?

Analysis
The data were analysed using a framework approach. Please describe this approach. 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.

Results
Tradition versus change: Families’. ..... Is this a theme? (not presented in Table 3)
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 information in the paper and should be stressed more even in abstract conclusion. It is not potentially harmful but harmful (Table 3).

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

Conclusion

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

The numbering of references should be checked and followed according to the journal guidelines.

The study is sometimes referred to as descriptive and sometimes as explorative. The study seems to be more explorative

Eat more food
Obs the tempus in the text

TCM=?
Motherwort=?
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests in relation to this paper.