Reviewer's report

Title: Correlates of low birth weight: a retrospective study from Iran

Version: 1 Date: 24 January 2008

Reviewer: Shingai Feresu

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached. For example, additional necessary experiments or controls, statistical mistakes, errors in interpretation.

Re: "Correlates of low birth weight: a retrospective study from Iran"

Review

This paper investigates correlates of low birth weight in Tehran, Iran. The paper gives already established correlates of low birth weight, and therefore is not innovative. It may be important and appropriate for national and local audience.

I have some comments on the paper:

1. Since this paper is looking at low birth weight in term pregnancies, may be the title ought to reflect that.

2. In abstract in results, perhaps the author need not show results which include the null hypothesis as a main finding, since they have other results which are significant. They also need to specify that these are crude estimates.

3. Since these low birth weight infants are term, some discussion about IUGR and SGA would be proper in the background, methods, results and discussion of this paper and would enrich the paper.

4. Methods; it is not clear to me which medical and obstetrical conditions they identified and were not common in this population, which I find a little strange. May be clarify and write something about this somewhere in the methods, and if not found some reason why this is like that. Covariates such as parity and its relationship to LBW also need to be reported.

5. Methods; it is not clear why the authors chose not to conduct an adjusted analysis for this study, we need to know the adjusted results, also for medical and obstetrical characteristics, I know once you put parity it wipes out the effect of age, but such issues need to be addressed. BMI or mid-arm circumference may also address malnutrition in mother, and may have an additive interaction effects with smoking, therefore in short, a detailed and complete analysis is needed.

6. Tables; the titles need to be revised to reflect what is going in this table,
suggest checking how tables are titled in other articles.

7. Table 1; is not informative, columns showing the distribution on LBW and no LBW for all variables reported could aid and improve this table.

8. Table 2; once confidence intervals are shown, p-values are redundant, instead adjusted findings would be appropriate in that column. Also if you categorized mother’s age in Table 1, it needs to be uniform in Table 2, and mention the continuous effect of age in your narrative in the paper.

**What next?**: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest**: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English**: Acceptable

**Statistical review**: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests**: ‘I declare that I have no competing interests’