Author's response to reviews

Title: Transition to parenthood: the needs of parents in pregnancy and early parenthood.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
RE: 1860175583154855 - Transition to parenthood: the needs of parents in pregnancy and early parenthood

This is the first time that we have seen this reviewer’s comments (reviewer 3) and our responses are in blue text.

Reviewer 3 comments

“Some improvements have been done, but I still think the article lacks depth and is unfocused.”

We have not attempted to claim that this is an in depth analysis but we do feel that we have maintained the focus of our research question: to explore the needs of parents in pregnancy and early parenthood.

“1. Supported/unsupported is still used in the text.”

We agree that these terms are used in the text but only in brackets at the end of each quotation to identify whether the women who made the quotation as being ‘supported’ or ‘unsupported’. We can easily change this to something like those with/without a partner or ‘cohabiting’, if this is thought to be more appropriate.

“2. Sample selection seems strange to me. If you aim to reach a diversity among mothers such as "supported"/ co-habiting or "unsopported /single mothers, you will have to collect data from both groups to fulfill your aim. It is stated that there is no difference between co-habitng and single mothers - according to the results it seems that you quote unsupported mothers favoring their mothers as support in life which is not said about the cohabiting mothers.”

We collected data from both groups of women, those with and without a regular partner. We have been explicit about the lack of participants who did not have a partner but we did not find that any additional themes emerged from their interviews, as stated in the text (page 6, paragraph 2 of the results section).

We do not state that the unsupported women favoured their mothers as support more than those women who were supported. We state that the fathers had different support mechanisms (if any). We use two different quotes to strengthen the details of the text. One quote is from a supported woman and one quote is from an unsupported woman (page 7, “Support received and available” section, under the sub-heading “Parents”). We did this so that we could demonstrate that it was not one particular group of women who benefited from this element of support.
“3. I cannot identify a clear comparative analysis over time and relating to diversity.”

We did not use comparative analysis to analyse the data. The analysis we have applied to the data is, “content analysis after categorisation into main sub-headings [41,42]. The data were then classified and analysed based on thematic topics.”

“4. When you report background data, p. 5 in formation for some interviewees are missing Why?”

The results we report on the background information of the interviewees are examples to demonstrate the breadth of diversity of the participants (page 6, paragraph one of results section). We do not feel that it is relevant in this qualitative study to describe the employment status and type of each woman and her partner. However, we are able to do this if it is thought to be necessary. If it would help to clarify this section, we are also happy to substitute the words, “for example,” and change, “including”, to ‘include’, before the different employment descriptions. The sentence would then read, “The women’s employment status was varied, for example these included several different professions (n=6), administrators (n=4), teachers (n=2), secretaries (n=2), looking after the home (n=2) and manual worker (n=1).”

“5. Models of care, p. 6 I think this paragraph should be in the method section under "setting". You also use a concept which apply to the English setting and should be explained that is "caseload".

We agree that the ‘models of care’ section might be better situated in the methods section. We deliberated as to the best position for this section and opted for the results but are happy for it to be moved to the methods section.

The concept of ‘caseload’ is used in several countries both within and outside the EU. Between us and our colleagues we have experience of working in many different countries and have found this to be a concept that is widely used and understood. However, for those countries whose readers might not comprehend this term we are happy to provide an explanation, if necessary.

There are also a number of quotations which do not help the reader. In result section i.e. you refer to information the parents mention such as a dvd they have been recommended. The reader knows nothing about that and it is not a helpful quotation.

We are sorry if the reviewer feels that there are some quotations that are redundant within the text. Those that we have used were those that we felt gave a flavour of the women and their partner’s strength of feelings, added a personal element to the text and/or

Re the DVD (page 11, under section, “Type and sources of useful information”), we think that there must have been some misunderstanding on reading the text, therefore we may need to clarify this further. The DVD has not been created and this is further discussed (page 16, discussion section, final paragraph) and our final sentence in the discussion section, “Funding to develop an educational DVD is currently being sought”.

What next?: Reject because too small an advance to publish
We agree that our findings aren’t necessarily of huge impact in the greater scheme of things but for new parents they are very important, as evidenced by parents and professionals whom we have talked to about these results. We are also aware of no study in which first-time parents were asked for their views, both prospectively antenatally and retrospectively postnatally, about their educational and care needs in relation to the transition to parenthood. This study has highlighted the paucity of parents’ preparation for parenthood, the lack of inclusion of fathers from antenatal education and that the inadequate preparation remains a concern to both women and their partners. This is in spite of many studies worldwide and policy documents highlighting the importance of these issues. We identify several avenues for action, some of which are very simple, and further research to improve both new parents’ experience of antenatal education and their preparation for parenthood.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

We believe that this paper is potentially of interest to all those who care for new parents during pregnancy and in the early weeks of parenthood, whether in the UK or elsewhere, as demonstrated by the breadth of countries represented in the background.

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

We are happy to make changes that are deemed necessary.

We have attempted to address the above points but if you require further clarification, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards

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