Reviewer’s report

Title: Women’s attitude towards prenatal screening for red blood cell antibodies

Version: 1 Date: 27 May 2008

Reviewer: Leo P. P ten Kate

Review

Koelwijn et al: Women’s attitude towards prenatal screening for red blood cell antibodies

I found it difficult to decide between minor essential revisions and major compulsory revisions. So I leave this decision to the editor. In my opinion the paper cannot be accepted as it is, because the description is too sloppy and the use of words and terms is imprecise and inconsistent. Having said that I recommend acceptance after appropriate revision as the findings are interesting and important for the field of obstetric care.

1. The title should include the information that the antibodies are non-RhD

2. The last sentence of the methods section of the abstract incorrectly suggests that participants in group b and c also have a higher risk than participants in group a.

3. It is strange to read in the results section of the abstract that a strongly positive attitude is equalized with a balance between burden and utility. What if utility surpasses burden?

4. As the authors choose to restrict their study to non-RhD antibodies screening, one becomes curious about women’s attitude towards screening for RhD antibodies in the Netherlands or elsewhere. Please give references.

5. If it is true that empirical evidence in favour of non-RhD antibodies screening is limited, why did the authors choose to study attitude only? For instance: What is the meaning of a positive attitude when the effectiveness is low?

6. The word ‘obstetric’ is used rather sloppy. Sometimes it includes midwife and general practitioner (obstetric caregiver), at other times it seems to exclude them (women under obstetric care). Please be more specific.

7. Periphere laboratories. The word periphere does not exist in English language, and as far as I know the term peripheral laboratories is not understood as it is in the Netherlands. Why not local or regional laboratories?

8. The description of the procedure of the national screening program, the grouping of the participants (group a-e), and the flow chart in figure 1 do not
agree completely. Please indicate in the figure where each of the groups can be
found. Make sure that they are named similarly in the description of the national
screening program.

9. The prespecified behavioural model in Figure 1 needs much more explanation.
Why is this a good model?

10. Moderate command of Dutch language was required. Was it ever checked?
And how?

11. The authors use different terms in their description of the model and in the
figure. Please use the same terms.

12. It seems that the women had to report on anxiety retrospectively. How valid is
such reporting?

13. Was questionnaire 2 taken 2 weeks after birth (Figure 1) or sent twelve days
after the expected date of birth? This is not the same!

14. In each group 50 women were selected (results section). How was this
selection done?

15. What is meant by cases at risk? What by actual risk? Why not stick to
indicate which group (a-e) you mean?

16. Although according to table 3 significantly more women in the antibodies +/
father – group had read the written information, it is said in the text that all groups
were similar.

17. Tables should be numbered according to the order of their appearance in the

18. In the discussion the authors state that in their opinion a retrospective
judgement of experienced anxiety provides sufficient information etc. since when
is opinion a scientific argument?

19. Figures. Please mark the lines by a, b, c etc according to their group. Colours
are beautiful but sometimes difficult to distinguish, especially for the many people
with a colour vision problem and on Xerox copies

20. In Figure 2a the levels of the STAI trait are connected by lines with the levels
of STAI state. Is this common use?

21. Figure 2b. The position of group a is not indicated

22. Figure 2c. Testing man. Elsewhere father. Husband?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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