Author’s response to reviews

Title: The quality of maternity care services as experienced by women in the Netherlands

Authors:

    Therese T.A. Wiegers (t.wiegers@nivel.nl)

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Cover letter to BMC

Dear Editors,

In response to your e-mail of February 18 with the new reviewers’ reports I hereby send you the revised manuscript. In this letter I will give a point-to-point response to the concerns of the reviewers.

**Reply to reviewer 1:**

I am pleased that my adaptations have sufficiently addressed your comments.

**Reply to reviewer 2:**

Methods, page 7: representativeness of the sample is based on national data (CBS). Apparently the reference [19] was lost in the process.

My remarks in the previous cover letter about GP data being unavailable were not about the data in this project, but about the data in the PRN. GP maternity care data have not been included in the PRN-data, because GPs did not register their care in a way that could be incorporated in the PRN data. Therefore, PRN data can not be used to evaluate the representativeness of my data. That is why I have not mentioned the PRN data in the article text, but only in the covering letter.

There are no 161 women missing in table 4: table 4 presents items from the postnatal questionnaire only (response=632). Response on the prenatal questionnaire was 793.

Page 8: changes made conform suggestion.

Results, page 8: Sentence is adapted.

Page 9: Some of the text has been removed.

Discussion, page 11: references are the same as mentioned in the text above: 7, 8 and 9. They are added.

Tables: in table 1 I removed the ‘total’ column, but that leaves it to the reader to calculate the overlap. Asterisks are added to the title row.

In table 2 the column headings are changed as requested.

Table 3 is, as you assumed in your earlier review, not a comparison between planned and actual place of birth, but a cross tabulation between place of birth and parity. I had already indicated that in the title of the table, but I have added now the Chi Square values. The Chi Square for the first analysis (planned place of birth by parity) = 19.88 with p<0.01; the Chi Square for the second analysis (actual place of birth by parity) = 51.54 with p<0.001. The columns are rearranged and lines are drawn between them.

In table 4 each item is tested with Chi Square or Fisher’s Exact Test by parity. I see no added value in providing a new column with actual p-values. The title is changed. The source of these data is not the PRN but this study. The total number of respondents to the postnatal questionnaire is 632, but 11 women did not answer the question whether they had given birth to their first or second or later child. The occurrence of these small missing numbers is referred to in the text (page 7).

Table 6: as mentioned in the title, scores and ratings of quality are tested for different situations (known care provider: yes/no; gave birth at home: yes/no). Test statistics are Chi Square in the case of scores and Student t in the case of ratings.

Figures: titles are in the text (as requested by the journal). I have also added them to the figures. I am not sure which ‘code’ you refer to. In figure 1 the different care settings (primary care and secondary care) and the referral between settings is indicated. In figure 2 the transformation from a 10-point scale to a three point scale is indicated.

**Reply to reviewer 3:**

To the first column of table 2 is added: more than 1 response possible.

I hope my response and adaptations to the manuscript will lead to your decision to publish this article.

Best regards,

Therese A. Wiegers