Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 3 Date: 19 March 2009

Reviewer: Christine East

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. The author has made a number of important modifications, or portions thereof, based on previous recommendations and the manuscript is somewhat improved as a result. The only remaining concern is the data in table 4. The author indicates in the letter of reply that responses presented in column one are not intended to be the summation of data in columns 2 and 3, due to non-response to the key question about parity that defines these 2 columns, by 11 women. The letter indicates that this is stated in the text (not the table) but I was only able to find a general comment about not all women replying to all questions. The differences in summed data of columns 2 and 3 translate to assumptions from column 1 figures that an extra woman responded to the question about vacuum/forceps and between zero (induction) and 7 women (spontaneous birth) did not reply. This may have been the case (if that is possible, given the critical question about parity), but the lack of transparency here then calls other data into doubt. It is important that, at minimum table 6 has a comment in the footer to confirm that not all women responded to the question about parity, and some explanation as to why this varies from +1 and -7.

I thank the author for including both numbers and % as requested, but will leave it to the editorial process to correct the inconsistency of use of brackets ( ) around numbers in table 2 when they were intended to be around the % figures, as would be standard for data tables.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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