Reviewer's report

Title: Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder: development of consensus referral criteria for specialist diagnostic assessment in Australia

Version: 1 Date: 8 May 2014

Reviewer: Liza Edmonds

Reviewer's report:

Congratulations to the authors for submitting this article, it was very interesting.

I do have some questions/comments which I hope are helpful.

In the methods section, under recruitment, 139 people agreed to participate. How many people were asked to participate? I could not see this in the results section either. Also 13 out of 17 people attended the consensus workshop - what happened to the other 4 did they only attend part of it? Again I could not see this in the results section.

In the results section, under criteria for prenatal alcohol exposure in paragraph 2 it was noted that "9 respondants indicted support.." out of how many respondants were the 9?was it 9/17 or 9/139? I think it would be useful for the readers to know this so that they can interpret your findings.

Also in the workshop findings results section - can I suggest that it be reviewed as I found it hard to read. While I realise it is hard to condense information on a large amount of material, it might be more reader friendly to review this section.

In the discussion section I could not the discussion around the strengths and limitations of this study. While I realise that the response rate was reasonable for surveys - it was still relatively low. This might be acceptable in this situation but I think it is still worthy of discussion. Other potential discussion points include that not all of the consensus panel were able to attend the full 2 days, that it was a select group of individuals who attended this work shop etc (potential selection bias).

I am sure that the authors would have ensured that indigenous peoples were included on the panel but this was not mentioned within the paper or methodology. I think if acknowledgement of such input is important and would demonstrate the authors cultural awareness of such important issues for most first nation communities internationally.

I look forward to reading the paper published perhaps with the consideration of the points suggested.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
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.