Reviewer's report

Title: A survey on beliefs and formula-handling practices of parents and child care workers in Palermo, Italy

Version: 2 Date: 13 July 2009

Reviewer: Katie Kavanagh-Prochaska

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. My primary concern with this manuscript, as presented, is with the comparison of parental response to child care worker responses. It is stated in the manuscript that child care workers had been previously trained in the objectives of the investigation. My interpretation of this is that these workers may then be biased in answering the survey questions. Is this a misinterpretation of the methodology? Can the authors clarify?

2. In addition, the results that are statistically significant appear to rarely be clinically meaningful. For example, reporting a significant difference between a mean score of 1.38 and 1.63. Though statistically different, is this truly a result that can indicate that these groups should be educated differently or one more than the other? Consider reporting as a pooled group and only highlighting those results that may have clinical relevance. It is still important data, indicating the need for more education of those caring for infants.

3. I would like further clarification of the reasoning behind not seeking ethical approval. Generally, any research must receive approval, even when subjects cannot be identified. Usually this is performed by someone not within the IRB itself, but with the training to make the decision that the research will not be harmful. Though technically "exempt" there is still evidence of oversight. Can the authors clarify this?

In light of these concerns, I recommend that the authors consider this feedback and revise discussion and conclusions accordingly.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The series of tables within table 2 are beneficial for understanding the results, but I would prefer to also see mean scores as they are presented in the text.

2. Please indicate how age, education, and child number cut-offs were chosen

3. Finally, please have someone with excellent English language skills review this manuscript, especially the Discussion section. It is a well-written manuscript but some nuances of the language have been overlooked.

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