Reviewer’s report

Title: Employment, income, and education and prevalence of depressive symptoms during pregnancy: The Kyushu Okinawa Maternal and Child Health Study

Version: 1 Date: 24 May 2012

Reviewer: Geertje Goedhart

Reviewer’s report:

Major Essential revisions
1. Methods/Statistical analysis: Could you explain, by means of univariate analysis, reasoning and/or literature, why you selected a priori the factors mentioned in this paragraph as potential confounding factors?
2. Discussion/8th paragraph: I don’t agree with your point about insufficient statistical power, as this is not different compared to the analysis for employment.

Minor Essential revisions
3. Table 1: the title of the 2nd column ‘n(%)’ does not fit all rows. It is more appropriate to add ‘n(%)’ to all variables except the first two.
4. Table 2: the prevalence numbers for the variable Employment status count up to 1740 instead of 1741.

Discretionary revisions
1. Introduction: Please add something about the importance of studying depression during pregnancy, i.e. risk for (unborn) child.
2. Methods/Study Population: instead of the words ‘provide....with.....’ I would suggest ‘invite....using...’ (3 times).
3. Methods/Measurements/1st sentence: ‘filled out’ and ‘self-administered’ means basically the same.
4. Methods/Measurements/3rd sentence: a better word instead of ‘elicited’ could be ‘collected’, ‘contained’ or ‘held’.
5. Methods/Measurements/2nd paragraph: do you know whether unemployed women were voluntarily unemployed (e.g. to take care of children)? I expect a difference in depressive symptoms between voluntarily versus non-voluntarily unemployed women.
6. Results/2nd paragraph: it is better to put the sentence ‘depressive symptoms in relation to selected socioeconomic variables’ the other way around, i.e. the way you analyzed it.
7. Results/2nd paragraph: please keep in mind that odds ratios imply a
higher/lower risk for one category compared to a reference category. That means for example that the job types sales, services, production and other, do not have a lower risk for depressive symptoms compared to the unemployed group. This also holds for the results section in the Abstract.

8. Results/Discussion: for consistency, please use ‘depressive symptoms’ instead of ‘depression’.

9. Table 1: Please shortly explain the term ‘Nuclear family structure’.

10. Discussion: the 2nd and 3rd paragraph describe the same issue, i.e. comparison with previous studies. Can you merge the content of these paragraphs? Furthermore, you do not mention here the systematic review of Lancaster (2010), mentioned in the Introduction section, which has conflicting results.

11. Discussion/4th paragraph: Could you provide a literature reference for “the positive associations between holding a professional or technical job…..with job satisfaction”?

12. Discussion/5th paragraph: the comparison in CES-D score between study subjects and female adolescents is not very appropriate, as the study subjects are considerably older, and usually the prevalence of depression is higher among women of reproductive age. Can you provide more appropriate numbers of depressive symptoms in general population/women of same age group?

13. Conclusions: I’m not confident about the 1st sentence. This study is first in what exactly?

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.