Author's response to reviews

Title: Anxiety and Stress in the Postpartum: Is there more to postnatal distress than depression?

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to reviewers

We thank both reviewers for their thoughtful comments and suggestions. Modifications have been made to the manuscript in light of these comments. These are detailed below:

Reviewer 1 Vivette Glover

1. The paper is very wordy for its content and could benefit with being considerably shortened.

All sections of the paper have been reviewed and where appropriate shortened. Some sections of the Results (including Table 1) have been removed, where considered not central to the main argument of the paper.

2. Some of the relevant literature has not been reviewed. For eg. both Brouwers et al (2001) and Ross et al. (2003) have discussed the extent to which the EPDS measures anxiety, and this should be addressed.

Additional material and associated references have been added to the manuscript discussing the issue raised by Brouwers and Ross concerning the fact that the EPDS also measures anxiety. In addition, a 2005 paper by Jomeen & Martin was also included in reference to the EPDS measuring symptoms of anxiety.

3. Abstract. Second sentence. The EPDS is never claimed to be a diagnostic benchmark – it is a screening tool, which can be followed with a diagnostic interview for diagnosis. This should be changed.

This sentence has been changed.

4. Results. Second sentence. States that 33 women were anxious/ and or stressed without depression. Should state that they showed symptoms of anxiety or stress.

This material has been changed.

5. p19 First sentence. What is shown is a discrepancy between the results with the two scales with no information about which would more closely correspond with other diagnostic measures. This needs to be changed.

This material has been changed.

6. The weaknesses of the study should be discussed more fully and critically.

Additional discussion of the weaknesses of the study has been included in the discussion.
Reviewer 2

1. Generalizability concerns: This sample was part of a larger cross-sectional study. The authors do not mention what the study was about. This is important to determine what subjects were originally volunteering for and how representative they may be of this population. Moreover, how many women were invited to participate but declined. How many agreed to participate but never returned the questionnaires?

Additional information concerning the study has been included in the method section. Further discussion of the potential weaknesses of the study has also been included in the discussion, particularly in relation to the recruitment of subjects and its impact on generalizability.

2. Results section. Normative DASS data – what age range were the women in the normative sample, this would be informative to determine if this is an appropriate comparison group.

In response to the request from both reviewers to shorten the paper this section of the Results was removed, along with Table 1 as it was not considered central to the main argument of the paper.

3. Page 22, 3rd sentence in the last paragraph – inventory should not be in parenthesis.

This error has been corrected.

4. The results section is very lengthy and at timed difficult to follow.

We have attempted to reduce the length of the paper as a whole. We have removed a section from the Results (and associated table) and have tried to be more clear and concise in other sections.