Reviewer’s report

Title: Postpartum anxiety, depression and social health: findings from a population-based survey of Australian women

Version: 1 Date: 7 November 2010

Reviewer: Caroline Homer

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. It describes a study which collected populated-based data through a survey in late 2007.

The paper is well written, clearly constructed and overall, a pleasure to read. The methodology is appropriate and the findings are clear and interesting. I recommend publication.

I have a few small comments to make but these are mostly minor discretionary changes.

In the Abstract, the term Clinicians is used. It would be useful to explain who this might refer to. In many contexts, the term ‘clinicians’ is often is taken to refer to ‘medical practitioners’ only. It is important to ensure that nurses, midwives and community health workers need to be included in the definition of clinics.

It would useful to have an additional paragraph about the context of care in pregnancy and the first 6 months following birth in the states of Victoria and South Australia. This article is clearly for an international audience and so a bit more about how systems of care are arranged in Australia would be useful.

I suggest using the term ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ rather than ‘Indigenous’ as this is mostly preferred by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (under the Questionnaire section).

The modified OECD equivalence scale requires a reference (under the Questionnaire section).

The sample was drawn from all women who gave birth in 1 4 week period in Victoria and a 8 week period in South Australia. It is not clear how the names of the women were retrieved. I presume it was from the hospitals. The paper states the hospitals agreed to participate but I am clear how this was operationalised. Did the hospital staff distribute the questionnaires or did the hospitals provide the names of women and the researchers posted the surveys? Clarification on this matter is required (essential revision).

The proportion of women with private health insurance was 48%. This seems high and certainly higher than in the general childbearing population which is 25-30% Are these women representative of women giving birth in Australia? A comment about this needs to be made in the limitations section.
I would also like to see a comment about the importance of social support in the discussion about services and programs.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'