Reviewer's report

Title: Postpartum behaviour as predictor of weight change from before pregnancy to one year postpartum

Version: 4 Date: 28 January 2011

Reviewer: Michelle Mottola

Reviewer's report:

Congratulations to the authors. The paper reads much better and is more concise.

I have a few more points for clarification.

Compulsory Revisions:
1) Page 5, par. 2, line 9. Although the authors have done a good job of justifying why the PA guideline was not appropriate to the reviewers, it is important to include the reason here to the readers as well.

2) Page 6, par. 2, line 2. Again the authors have justified why 4 months for breastfeeding was chosen to the reviewers but the rationale should also be included here in the paper since the WHO suggests exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months. Justifying this time point for the reader is also important.

3) Page 8, par. 3, line 3-5. I would divide this statement into 2 sentences because at the moment it is confusing.

4) Page 10, line 7. Change to read “These results indicate total pregnancy weight gain combined with postpartum behaviours may influence the degree…..”

5) Page 10, par. 2. I found this paragraph confusing, especially when excessive weight gain during pregnancy is linked to obesity. In North America this is a huge problem. I think your Dutch population is more the exception to not retaining weight because in North America this is clearly not the case. I would delete the sentence “Only a few studies…” and change the last statement to read “Of course these data originated from different samples, but they certainly illustrate that in a Dutch population weight change attributed to pregnancy may be less profound than in other populations”. There are many references that would attribute excessive weight gain during pregnancy to the obesity epidemic. In addition, in Figure 1 the reason why weight retention is so low in your population is because these women were normal weight and did not gain excessive weight during pregnancy. The Institute of Medicine (2009) suggests that normal weight women gain between 11.4-16 kg (25-35 pounds). Your population is well within these guidelines and may explain why they did not retain much weight at 1 year and were not different than the weight gain of nonpregnant women in the same age group. The Dutch population is exceptional!

6) Page 11, first par. This sentence is confusing. What are the authors suggesting here? This needs to be rewritten. How do you know that this PA
behaviour discriminates women better with regards to weight change after pregnancy?

7) Page 11, 3rd par, line 5. Why would sitting be more difficult to estimate? What are the authors suggesting here?

8) I would also add that another weakness is the fact that all 3 time points during the postpartum period were combined together. Future work may reflect the importance of early, or late postpartum changes of behaviour which may be accomplished with a larger N.

Minor Revisions:

1) Page 3, par 2, line 16. change “and on studies on” to “from studies examining”
2) Page 3, par 2, line 17. change “objective of this study” to “objective of the present study”
3) Page 4, par 2, line 8. change “to stimulate the response with regard to follow-up” to “for follow-up questionnaires”.
4) Pg 5, par 3, line 2. delete “when”
5) Pg 5, par 4, line 5. add “postpartum” before the “three time points”
6) Pg 9, par 2, last line. delete “either” and add “either of” after “in”
7) Pg 10, line 4. Change “was” to “were”
8) Pg 10, par 2, line 2. Change “they covered” to “examined”
9) Pg. 10, par. 2, line 3. Change “such a” to “the same”
10) Pg. 10, par. 3, line 2. Change “is” to “are”
11) Page 10, par 4, line 1. Change “this study” to “the present study” and also on pg. 11, par 2, line 1.
12) Pg. 10, par 4, line 4. Change “the activity” to “our activity”
13) Pg. 11, par 2, line 6. Should this be quantitative rather than qualitative?
14) Pg. 11, 2nd last line. change “no significant” to “not a significant”
15) Pg. 12 par 2, line 1. Add “rate” after “response”
16) Pg. 12, par 2, line 7. delete “however”
17) Pg. 12, last line. Delete “and” before “total”
18) Table 2 – title. Change “scores of” to “scores at”

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.