Reviewer's report

Title: Behavioural interventions for weight management in pregnancy: A systematic review of quantitative and qualitative data.

Version: 1 Date: 10 March 2011

Reviewer: Ginny Brunton

Reviewer's report:

It was a pleasure to read this review. The authors have done an excellent job highlighting both the complexity of the topic and the fit between the perspectives of those involved and the degree to which those perspectives are represented in the evaluated interventions.

Methods are appropriate to the question and are well-described. Authors have described their work as based upon previous research; and it appears to be rigorous and detailed. A nice description of the rationale for doing a mixed methods review is provided. The data appear to be sound; text is backed up by tables and findings supported by quotes. The relevant standards for reporting and data deposition appear to have been followed. Limitations of the work are clearly stated. The title of the work does not clearly convey findings, but rather topic and methods. This is acceptable as it would be too long otherwise. The abstract clearly conveyed all of the main points from the study. Overall, the writing is clear and understandable.

1. Major Compulsory Revisions
None.

2. Minor Essential Revisions

Methods section: Some suggestions to add detail on review quality for readers:
• Under Search: were free text and thesaurus-specific searches conducted?
• Under Data extraction section: how was quality of qualitative data extraction assured (e.g. data checking)?
• Under Data Synthesis section: how was the threshold for quality determined, or was it? Especially important as under Findings section on Qualitative Studies authors described study quality as ‘very good’, ‘good’ and ‘poor’.
• A reference is needed in relation to the sentence ‘…established principles developed for the analysis of qualitative data.’
• It might be a good idea to explain why authors did not look at differences based on SES, education, ethnicity, age. These could be expected to influence both quantitative and qualitative findings.

Some errors in text:
• I² value differs between abstract (76%), Section 4.5.1 Gestational Weight Gain
(67%), and Discussion (76%).

• Quote by Fox & Yamaguchi 1997 (check second author spelling).

Some grammatical errors and omissions:
• Under Sub-section Do current interventions address the factors that influence women’s health behaviours in pregnancy?, the comment ‘It is clear that women’s attitudes and consequent behaviours vary considerably and are influenced by their pre-pregnancy behaviours and attitudes which themselves will be influenced by their social context.’
• ‘Women’s behaviour is also shaped by the peer support system surrounding them.’
• ‘The interventions in the included trials did not seek to address the wider, social factors that contribute to poor weight management’ – need to cite some…
• Under Implications: authors provide a good description of future research design and methods, but need to emphasise their findings that the focus should be on interventions aimed at communities to change social attitudes to weight in pregnancy?

3. Discretionary Revisions

In relation to attitudes to health behaviours being influenced by the media and may shift over time: this may not be a limitation if included studies have been conducted recently. If this limitation is retained, authors should cite research demonstrating that there has been a shift in attitudes between 1990 and 2010.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.