Reviewer's report

Title: Perinatal mortality in non-Western migrants in Norway as compared with their countries of birth and Norwegian women

Version: 2 Date: 23 November 2012

Reviewer: Rhonda Small

Reviewer's report:

The authors' revisions have addressed most of my comments and suggestions with the exception of the response to this major essential revision point from my first review:

1. It would be of interest to know something more about the excess mortality that is occurring for those immigrant groups with higher PMR compared with the Norwegian-born. Is it possible to separate stillbirths from early neonatal deaths in the analyses, in addition to giving the total PMR? Other data would suggest that the excess deaths among immigrants may mostly be in stillbirths. Separating deaths in this way may give clues to explanations about some of the disparities with Norwegian-born women.

What is required here was not a comparison of the proportions of deaths in each group that were stillbirths but rather a comparison of the stillbirth and early neonatal death rates in each group. Using the figures in the manuscript, this would show that for migrants the stillbirth date is 309/40223 = 7/1000 and for Norwegians it is 5357/1062744 = 5/1000; and for early neonatal death, for migrants it is 146/40223 = 3/1000 and for Norwegians 2740/1062744 = 2/1000. For early neonatal deaths the figures for migrants are 146/40223 and for Norwegians 2740/1062744 = 2/1000. (assuming my arithmetic is approximately correct!)

I would think that this does show that migrants overall have higher stillbirth rates than Norwegians and for individual migrant groups, there may be even starker differences, though as the authors point out the numbers are quite small in some groups. I think these stillbirth and neonatal death rates for all groups should be included as additional columns in Table 1 or in a separate table, and discussed in the text, which will likely need further revision.

I would like to see this issue addressed by the authors

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'