Reviewer’s report

Title: Knowledge and acceptability of Chlamydia trachomatis screening among pregnant women and their partners; a cross-sectional study

Version: 1
Date: 18 April 2014

Reviewer: Casper den den Heijer

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting study on a relevant topic. I agree with the authors that pregnant women are a good target group for Chlamydia trachomatis screening and that primary midwifery care practices are a good setting to offer the Chlamydia tests. This can be of help in order to control the spread and adverse sequelae of the disease.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. As the authors point out in their Discussion, selection bias could well have been present in this study. One point that is not addressed that could point to a selected group, is the lower chlamydia prevalence among the pregnant women (1.9%) in comparison with previous studies, such as the ones given in the Background section (range 3.2% to 5.9%, line 87). This point should be added to the Discussion.

2. I am wondering whether the questionnaire used in this study has been validated. Have you performed a pilot study prior to this study? Could you say anything about the validity and reproducibility?

3. In the statistical tests performed, no adjustments have been made for other factors, like age, educational level and ethnical origin, in which the two groups compared could differ. Is there a reason why this has not been done?

4. Effect sizes (for example odds ratio’s) are more helpful to interpret results than P values. If it is possible, I would prefer that the effect sizes can be included, where possible.

Minor Essential Revisions

5. The abstract gives a chlamydia prevalence of 2.2% among the pregnant women (line 68) and in the Results section a prevalence of 1.9% is stated (line 221). This discrepancy should be resolved.

6. Although the comparisons are being given in Table 1, I think it would be helpful to state the effect sizes in the text in lines 235-237.

7. I am not surprised that a very high percentage (92.8%) of the participating pregnant women and their partners had heard about chlamydia before they participated in this study and knew that the infection was a STI (lines 226-227). The authors give one reason in the Discussion: the possibility to search the Internet for correct answers (lines 309-311). Another reason could be in the way
the question was asked: the answer was already included. I wonder whether such a question accurately investigates the awareness about chlamydia being a STI. This might be the reason for the discrepancy with the results from the Australian study, mentioned in the Discussion (lines 324-325). Perhaps the authors can comment on this.

8. ‘…it may be necessary to test all pregnant women in the Netherlands for chlamydia, and… (lines 349-350). In the previous sentence it is stated that a pregnant women can be infected by her partner during pregnancy. For this reason, isn’t it recommendable that partners should be tested too?

Discretionary Revisions

9. ‘for also partners’ in line 146 should be rephrased.

10. What is meant by ‘five did not have a unique participation code’ (lines 211-212)?

11. What could be the reason that, compared to the partners, pregnant women indicated more often that testing partners for chlamydia during pregnancy was not necessary (lines 270-272)?

12. ‘ti’ in line 343 should be corrected to ‘to’ and, in the same line, ‘babay’ should be corrected to ‘baby’

13. Chlamydia has not been abbreviated to CT in the manuscript, but is given as CT in line 374. In the rest of the manuscript the term ‘chlamydia’ has been used, so I would do the same here.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have worked with Francois Schellevis during a previous European project and he was one of my promotores at my PhD defense. The subject of this project was different from the one addressed in this manuscript.

(I am not 100 percent sure whether this is a competing interest)