Reviewer's report

Title: Low Birthweight and Socioeconomic Factors in Mexico.

Version: Date: 8 September 2004

Reviewer: Shingai Feresu

Reviewer's report:

General Review

This is an interesting paper on the relative contribution of low birthweight in a medium to low income country setting. As limited data is the major concern, the manuscript addresses the issue of socioeconomic position and its relationship to low birthweight which has not received adequate attention in low income countries. The information is vital to researchers, and health professionals. For this reason, a paper like this is important. There are however important issues to be addressed and clarified.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. In general although I recognize that English may be the second language in this case, but more care to editing would have greatly improved the manuscript. In some sentences for example on page 1, abstract line 13 “no receiving calcium….”, probably the author wanted to say ‘not’ instead. There are numerous examples throughout the paper which could be sited, like phrases such as “It was found that….”, “can also be seen”, perhaps the authors may benefit by using a professional editor
2. The abstract, needs tightening up, as well, and maybe the authors could avoid just presenting information as ‘3 models, or in 3 models’, as often the abstract could stand on its own, and should give precise information.
3. The background section is long and winding and needs more focusing, what is the point? SES and LBW, they need to just make a focused and precise argument.
4. In methods, a more detailed description of how and why they chose the 3 models they present would help the reader with more information necessary to understand this paper.
5. In the results section, once one reports the confidence intervals in line 2, page 6, there is no need to report that the relationship was statistically significant.
6. Table 1 page 9, the categorization of socioeconomic position should be identical to what they described in the methods, to make the paper consistent and easy to follow. Perhaps for maternal age they wanted to identify the 3rd category as >30???. In Table 4, most results are not significant, it would be more meaningful to report those significant or borderline, or at least which were significant in first 3 tables but those which are redundant, report them below as footnotes as “adjusted for…..”
7. In the discussion it not clear what the main findings are. The authors could have easily report the main findings in relationship to other studies in a concise way. The authors should consider the importance of focusing their discussion to their objective, and need to develop their thoughts more clearly.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests: NONE