Reviewer’s report

Title: Postpartum practices of puerperal women and their influencing factors in three regions of Hubei, China

Version: 1  Date: 23 July 2006

Reviewer: Debra Creedy

Reviewer’s report:

General
This paper provides useful insights on the postpartum practices of childbearing women in a province in China. Results could inform the provision of appropriate public health care to mothers and babies in this and similar areas. Generally however, the paper is too long and needs to be reduced in length. This is especially the case in the background, data collection and statistical analysis and discussion sections. Editorial assistance should be sought when revising the paper.

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

The paper focuses on postpartum practices of women in the Chinese province of Hubei. The rationale for the study needs be strengthened. Details on the unique characteristics of the province or why research in this geographic area provides insights not obtained from other studies with rural Chinese populations needs to be made.

As the study is about women, I believe it is more appropriate to refer to them as "women" or "participants" rather than "subjects". This change should be made throughout the paper. Similarly, the term "countryside" should be changed to "rural".

Reduce the length of the statistical analysis section. Information on variables is not required as categories are shown in Tables. Often descriptive analyses are provided without determining significant differences between groups (city, suburban, rural). The section on factors influencing specific dietary behaviours needs to include actual results of the multiple logistic regression analysis.

Data on discarding colostrum needs to be included as a behaviour taboo in Table 4. Results in regards to influencing factors are unclear. The associated Table 5 could be revised to include a subheading such as "location - city" or "place of residence - rural".

The discussion clearly links results with previous studies but is too lengthy and information provided in the background is repeated here. This section could be strengthened with a set of clear recommendations for practice and further research.

The reference list has a number of incorrect citations. There is confusion with the placement and use of surnames and christian names (eg, refs 4 & 7); upper case is used (refs 12 & 13); journal abbreviations are inconsistent(eg, 10,11,12,13).

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 whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests