Reviewer's report

Title: Smoking in pregnant women in Cantabria (Spain), trend and determinants of smoking cessation. A survey

Version: 1 Date: 15 June 2006

Reviewer: Judith Lumley

Reviewer's report:

General
This is an interesting and important paper given the large gap in the evidence about smoking in pregnancy - and changes in smoking - from Southern Europe.

Its strengths include:
- Regional base of the hospital
- Random sample of all women giving birth
- Use of personal interview, prenatal care records and review of clinical charts
- Appropriate analyses

The proportion of women smoking in pregnancy showed almost no change (32.6% to 31.5%), which is disappointing, and a high proportion by comparison with recent randomised trial data (in the standard care arms).

What is also clear in the paper is that there have been substantial changes in smoking behaviour before pregnancy: a reduction from 53% to 40% of women. As a consequence of this population change in smoking, smoking cessation during pregnancy actually fell during the 5 year period of observation.

The associations of smoking and quitting are very similar to those elsewhere, except for the benefit of adequate prenatal care (Kessner Index), which hasn't been shown before but which probably reflects active & early participation in pregnancy care. I am not aware that higher parity has been associated with pregnancy smoking but it may be an association with relative poverty? Higher education and being married are usually associated with a lower prevalence of smoking in pregnancy as they are in this study.

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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

There is one paragraph (2nd sentence of 2nd para P 10) which needs to be rewritten for clarity.

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

I would have liked to see a definite plan outlined for a smoking cessation program in the hospital - ideally a trial - but given the five years of baseline data a hospital-wide intervention and implementation plan would be an appropriate alternative.

I found the Tables a bit difficult, probably because the description of the analyses, which was very clear in the text of the paper, was not summarised on the same page as the Tables. Reporting the procedures used for the analyses at the foot of the Tables might be helpful.
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.