Reviewer's report

Title: Physical activity and persistent low back pain and pelvic pain post partum

Version: 1 Date: 7 May 2008

Reviewer: Wendy Gilleard

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The paper addresses an interesting question about the impact of physical activity on LBPP in the post birth periods. Studies on non pregnant and pregnant women show a benefit for PA and therefore to ask if this effective in the post birth recovery period of the first 6months is an interesting question. The findings support previous results re the incidence of persistent PBPP however the LBPP was not affected by physical activity in contrast to non pregnant and pregnant women.

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

1. Statistics Page 4: If mean values are reported then a measure of dispersion either Standard Deviation, Standard Error or range should be also reported. I do not understand why if SDs were calculated why are they not reported.

2. Table 1: This is a little confusing the % currently located N(%) should be located on the relevant line below where that data is presented ie yes (%) , no (%).

3. Page 9: There is no basis for the statement“ it is likely that the experience of LBPP during pregnancy may have influenced women to begin PA…..” Either remove the statement or provide literature which supports this assertion.

4. Page 10: The statement “The protective effect of pre-pregnancy PA……..condition will develop in accordance with its own nature” is confusing. There appears to be an assumption that the effect of pre pregnancy PA is the same during and post pregnancy. Given a pregnancy is 9 months long there is considerable time for de training to occur and therefore why would there be any expectation that PA done prior to pregnancy would still have musculoskeletal effect (9+6) = 15months later. What is meant by a “threshold” and “own nature”? These terms are unclear and the argument is not convincing.

5. Page 11: The conclusion that “obesity was a risk factor” is not supported by the data. No measure of relationship eg correlation was done. There was an effect of obesity in that there was a difference between the groups. The relationship remains unknown and therefore you cannot suggest a casual relationship as has been alluded to in the abstract conclusion.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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