Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 9 October 2008

Reviewer: Wendy Gilleard

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

Statistics

What level of significance was used in the paper? It appears to be alpha = 0.05 however this needs to be stated

Results:

Physical Activity after Pregnancy: Text referring to figure 1 is confusing. Figure 1 does not include all respondents. It includes only those who commenced PA

Discussion:

1. I stand by my previous comment: The words “The protective effect of pre-pregnancy PA may be due to the elevation of a threshold which retards or prevents the development of LBPP”. This wording is confusing and incorrect. The present study found no effect of pre pregnancy PA on post birth back pain. I assume this is a reference to the findings of a previous paper and therefore a reference should be included.

The wording needs to be changed so that the reader is clear about what the author is saying. My eventual understanding is that there is some evidence for protective effect during pregnancy however none post birth. Therefore there may be a “threshold of some type that has been overcome. The current wording is not clear in its meaning and needs to be altered for clarification.

2. I stand by my comment re comment of casual effect on risk to PA from obesity.
   a. You have not done a t-test on this data . The test was a Chi Square
   b. The logistic regression tests do not indicate causation. There is just as much possibility that the lack of PA was the cause of the obesity or being obese meant that they did not exercise. So there is a relationship but the direction of the relationship is unknown. The text needs to be altered to reflect this possibility.

- Minor Essential Revisions

1. Table 1 and 3: Please put SD immediately after the mean. It is confusing to have them on the line below after the number of number and range.
2. Table 1. some parentheses missing

- Discretionary Revisions
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'