Reviewer's report

Title: Undocumented migrants lack access to pregnancy care and prevention

Version: 5 Date: 21 December 2007

Reviewer: Martha S Wingate

Reviewer's report:

The purpose of this study was to compare the use of preventive measures and pregnancy care of undocumented migrants with women who are legal residents of Geneva, Switzerland. This study is interesting and clearly states its unique contribution to the literature. The introduction provides an adequate overview of the study's contribution to the literature. The writing style is appropriate with a few minor typographical errors. The only statistical analyses conducted are descriptive. These are appropriate; however, additional analyses will add to the strength of the study. The results section, including tables, is appropriate. The discussion is adequate, outlining some of the strengths and limitations of the study. The title and abstract are appropriate.

Major Compulsory Revisions:
My main concern related to this paper is the lack of multivariable analyses included in the study. The results section includes 2 odds ratios, but these are not included in the tables. Adding additional analyses to this study would add to the strength. My suggestion would be eliminate some of the descriptive statistics and choose the most interesting outcomes and compare the risks of undocumented migrants to legal residents.

Minor Essential Revisions:
#1 Background: Page 3, last paragraph, beginning with "The objective">
The last portion of the sentence might read more clearly with the following: "health status and behaviour, violence exposure, and birth outcomes of undocumented migrant women to those of women having a legal residence permit."

#2. Bullet #1 might be more in keeping with the other bullets if it read, "Setting instead of the specific "health care facility".

#3 Page 7, 1st paragraph under subheading, "Nationality, reasons for migration, civil status, and social support">
1st sentence should read, "The large majority (84%) of undocumented migrants came from Latin America."
Discussion:

#4 Page 11, 1st full sentence: Alternatively, it might be hypothesized that good birth outcomes might be explained by the fact that women who were lost to follow-up might have had worse risks.

#5 Are the data related to undocumented women who delivered and left the country included in this study or should that include a reference?

#6 An additional limitation of the study is the small sample size, likely due to the short period of time of data collection.

#7 Are there any reporting issues related to the data? For example, is there any potential bias issue related to midwives? Self-report?

Conclusions:

#8 Page 14, 1st sentence should be modified to the following: Compared to women who are legal residents of Geneva, undocumented migrants had more unintended pregnancies, less use of preventive measures.

#9 2nd sentence: Should read, This study underscores the need for better access to prenatal care and routine screening for violence exposure.

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: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declared that I have no competing interests.