Reviewer's report

Title: Hemoglobin levels and anemia evaluation during pregnancy in the highlands of Tibet: a hospital-based study

Version: 2 Date: 2 July 2009

Reviewer: Alistair W Stewart

Reviewer's report:

I have no serious concerns about this manuscript.

Minor Essential Revisions

On line 144 the units for altitude must be described.

On line 200 it is inappropriate to say ‘… all appeared to be shifted left …’ as the formulae all require the values to shift left with increasing altitude.

About line 205 there is a sentence using kappa. This is an inappropriate measure in this circumstance. It measures association having adjusted for chance where there is no concept of chance here as there are formulae which deterministically give the adjusted values. The proportion classified as anemic after adjustment gives all the information the reader needs.

It is not clear what altitude was used in the adjustments. Was it the altitude of the place of residence of the women or the altitude of the hospital (Lhasa)? If the altitude of the hospital was used what effect could the different altitudes where the women lived have on the results?

Line 183 – what is meant by ‘…we adjusted other baseline characteristics to the same levels.’ The wording needs to be changed to make the meaning clear.

Line 221 – There is a reference to industrialised countries but there is no indication of the altitude of these countries. The details of the countries can be found in the referenced paper but some indication of altitude is needed for the readers of this paper.

Line 242 – it is not clear that the relationship is linear – the word needs to be removed.

The English used is quite good but needs tidying up before this paper is published in an English language journal. For example, in the last paragraph before the conclusion (lines 284-294) there are a number of changes needed. First line has the word ‘larger’ but it is not clear what it is larger than. The third line it should read ‘… selection bias of the sample …’. The sentence ‘Lacking of serum indexes …’ needs completely rewriting.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

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