Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Socio-demographic factors and processes associated with stages of change for smoking cessation in pregnant versus non-pregnant women.

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 30 June 2010

**Reviewer:** Monique Baha

**Reviewer’s report:**

This is a well written article which provides useful insights on the understanding of smoking during pregnancy and could be used to design cessation interventions for pregnant smokers. However, there are some major weaknesses.

• Major Compulsory Revisions

**Methods:**

Were tobacco-related information (such as number of cigarettes smoked daily or level of dependence) collected during the interviews? For women who were ex-smokers, for how long had they been abstinent? Were these women spontaneous quitters or had they been offered smoking cessation counselling? If none of the above information were collected or if data were omitted on purpose, this is a limit which should be mentioned and discussed.

**Results:**

In the paragraph on stages of change: adding information for instance on the duration of abstinence (if available) would complement the profile of pregnant ex-smokers who maintained abstinence. Information on the level of dependence or the number of cigarettes smoked would help better describe women who are pre-contemplative.

In the methods, last sentence in the paragraph “design”, the authors describe the acceptability of smoking questionnaire as a measure of women’s perception of the acceptability of smoking in different groups. Unfortunately, detailed results are not presented. It would be interesting to discuss whether pregnant smokers view their own smoking as more (or less) acceptable than others’.

**Discussion:**

I’m afraid that the socio-demographic profile of pregnant smokers is a well documented result (see for example, Schneider et al. The European Journal of Contraception & Reproductive Health Care 2008, or Ebert and Fahy Women and Birth 2007). Authors should acknowledge that and present their findings in a way which clearly shows what this study adds to the body of knowledge, instead of simply confirming existing results.

In my opinion, key findings of this study are: the scores of experiential and
behavioural processes between stages of change by group of women, scores on the situational temptation measure, and the acceptability of smoking between stages of change by group of women.

Conclusion:
Results from this study should allow the authors to draw conclusions with more relevant implications for smoking cessation interventions during pregnancy: for instance, the importance of evaluating the social situations and craving situations that women face, especially at earlier stages of change. Authors could also mention that future interventions should focus on the inability of pregnant smokers to apply behavioural coping mechanisms by themselves.

Abstract:
Results on the acceptability of smoking should be mentioned in the results section.
The conclusion presented here may not be the most accurate considering that findings in terms of social situations or social acceptability of smoking reveal similarities between pregnant and non-pregnant women.

• Minor Essential Revisions

Methods:
In the paragraph on sample: Would the authors mind explaining what they mean by “healthy” women? Does it mean for instance that women suffering cardiovascular or respiratory diseases were not included?

Discussion:
In the second paragraph please rephrase “education confers wisdom regarding health”.

Tables:
It seems information presented in table 1 is redundant with the figures.

References:
Reference (30) is listed in the references section but not mentioned in the text.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.