Reviewer's report

Title: Psychometric properties of the Confidence and Trust in Delivery Questionnaire (CTDQ): A pilot study

Version: 2 Date: 18 September 2011

Reviewer: Heather Rowe

Reviewer's report:

There is in some places insufficient information in the cover letter to ascertain whether the reviewers’ suggestions have been adequately addressed

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?

No. The authors have not provided sufficient justification for the use of the questionnaire. It remains unclear how, if implemented, women’s questionnaire results would modify clinical practice. How would women scoring high (or low) be managed? There is growing evidence that women have mixed views about whether they prefer to complete written questionnaires or be asked questions by their care providers. The factor structure of the CTDQ suggests that 4 simple questions might suffice, as long as the matters uncovered can be responded to in a meaningful way so as to improve the experience of labour for the woman. It is not clear how a questionnaire would improve on clinical questioning.

The authors now statement that “……Thus questionnaires may be used to detect early problems of upcoming mothers with themselves which may result in improved childbirth outcome” is not sufficiently informative. Authors’ response to comment # 14 “We are quite aware of the practical implications (of using the CTDQ as a screening instrument) but would like to leave the example as it is” is unhelpful. Readers might not be aware.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

Some problems remain. Most importantly, the proposal was not seen or approved ay an institutional ethics committee. The article describes research in which participants were asked to provide sensitive and personal information. Participation in the research would not have had any direct benefit to participants but potential unacknowledged harm (however unlikely). The authors have not described any procedures that were in place to respond to or manage women who returned high (or low) questionnaire scores, nor made clear whether or how questionnaire results would modify clinical practice were the measure to be implemented in the future. These are important limitations.

3. Are the data sound?

They appear to be but there are some problems with analysis and interpretation

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
There is no significance texting in Table 4, without which it is difficult to justify some of the authors’ assertions. The use of confidence intervals is preferable to standard deviation(?) as at present.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

No always. See above. The results section makes much of the finding that the two “subscases”: “partner support” and “trust in medical competence” are correlated, but the authors do not offer any speculations as to why this might be, other than that the finding “should be investigated further”. This finding might be of clinical significance and warrants discussion.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?

Elaboration of this matter has now been added but the question of selection bias remains inadequately addressed. The final (elaborated) paragraph of the discussion (Limitations) is unclear.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

Background and discussion sections require further reference to the existing literature to justify the need for a new measure and establish what this study adds to existing knowledge.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

No. I would argue that it is not possible to establish the psychometric properties of an instrument from a pilot study and am not sure why an apparently systematically-recruited sample of 221 has been described as a “pilot”.

9. Is the writing acceptable?

New text is in need of editing and removal of repetition in places.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

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