Reviewer's report

Title: A qualitative investigation of the impact of peer to peer online support for women living with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

Version: 1 Date: 28 July 2013

Reviewer: Jodie Avery

Reviewer's report:

The aim of this study was to consider the experiences of women living with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome who access and participate in an online support group discussion forum dedicated to issues surrounding this condition.

Minor Essential Revisions:

Abstract:
I would have liked to have seen the number of participants specified in the abstract.

Background:
Well written summary of the current state of knowledge.

Methods:
A description of the interview schedule and how this was developed should be included in the methodological description of this paper. Additionally, no comment as to whether the sample size was adequate to answer this question is included. It may be that 50 women was too large and no mention of theoretical saturation was made.

Results:
It seemed after reading the results that one major theme that emerged from the positive aspects of using an OSG should have been that of "Empowerment". For example, the women were given confidence to better interact with health professionals, they were given information to make better informed choices. This is elucidated in the literature, but there is little mention of it here.

Discussion:
The limitations of the study should be included here. Another limitation of this study is that the women included were already pro active about their health, and this is why they joined the forum. They were already "help seekers" in some form and this may bias results.

The number of participants in this study is totally adequate for a qualitative study, particularly if theoretical saturation is achieved. It would be better to verify the results of this study using a larger sample and quantitative methods, with questions informed by the results of this study. Additionally a different recruitment source of women with PCOS could be used such as members of a support group not based on online activities, thus non users could be included.
Conclusion:
Are there any further implications of this research and what advice to policy makers do you have?

**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 I have no competing interests.