Reviewer’s report

Title: Perceived stress and emotional social support among women who are denied or receive abortions in the United States: a prospective cohort study

Version: 3 Date: 17 April 2014

Reviewer: Angela Taft

Reviewer’s report:

This is a ground-breaking study and the authors are to be congratulated on tackling such an important topic in a thorough manner and with many facets to the study. I believe the paper will be strengthened with some important inclusions in the method sections and a few small changes.

Minor essential revisions

1. Methods. I have looked at two other Turnaway studies AJPH 2013 and BMC WH but find no reference to sample size calculation and power to detect effect differences for outcome variables of interest. I fully understand that recruitment would be unpredictable (and your retention is excellent for such a sensitive topic. Nevertheless I think the authors should comment if they have done any analyses to calculate what power they have with the actual sample, especially as it is so highly clustered.

2. Please comment on how you accounted for missingness and what level of missingness you experienced in variables of those who have been retained.

3. Can you comment somewhere - methods or discussion why you did not measure marital status?

4. Please comment, esp in discussion, how representative of women of similar reproductive age (parity) etc your sample is?

Discretionary revisions

1. P3 Suggest moving your first paragraph on top of P4 to after first sentence of your BG as you define 'percieved stress and detail the harmful outcomes

2. Par 4, P4. I suggest adding after middle sentence 'perceived stress amonmg women (with unwanted pregnancies) who have abortions and who deliver

3. P5 Final sentence of the first para. My understanding of the Olds etc trial is that these were 'vulnerable' mothers and this should be qualified.

4. Consider adding to the final paragraph before Methods, a benefit of observing any change over time.

5. There are better systematic reviews of the relationship between abortion and mental health - published in the Br J Psychiatr and Harvard Psych review.
Consider citing.

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'