Reviewer's report

Title: Associations of depression and depressive symptoms with preeclampsia: Results from a Peruvian case-control study

Version: 1  Date: 10 June 2007

Reviewer: Vilho Hiilesmaa

Reviewer's report:

General

This study is a useful addition to the limited literature concerning the association of depression and preeclampsia.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. The authors were able to collect a large number (N=339) of parturients with preeclampsia.
   -Can you classify the severity of the condition using suitable criteria, (e.g. RR over 160/100, proteinuria over 3 g/24 h. etc)?
   -What was the number of cases with eclampsia?
   -Breakdown of preeclampsia should at least be included in the description of the material.

2. Please give more information on the setting of the obstetric care in Lima:
   -How many deliveries per year were there in the two hospitals?
   -Are they tertiary care/university or regional hospitals?
   -Are the most difficult cases of preeclampsia treated in these two hospitals or are they referred to somewhere else?
   -How well the material represents all women with preeclampsia in the region?

3. In Methods/paragraph 2/end you say that 95% of those who were approached agreed to participate.
   -Please provide, if possible, the total number of cases with preeclampsia in the hospitals.
   -How many % of them were approached by your team. How many patients with preeclampsia you did not approach?
   -Is there any selection bias of cases with more severe vs. less severe preeclampsia being included in your study.

4. Table 1:
   -Please sub-classify Gestational age at delivery (as you did for BMI in the same Table) , e.g. number (%) of deliveries at <26, 26-28, 29-31, 32-34, 35-37, >37 weeks.
   -Use suitable cutpoints as you prefer.
   -Prematurity is the most important of perinatal problems and deserves attention in any study.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

5. Classification of depression (pages 6; Table 2) :
   -To which category the score 20 belongs? Please clarify.
   -The score of exactly 20 is currently not allocated in no category.

6. Methods, paragraph 2:
   -I dont get the significance of the sentence "Nulliparity was not a criterion for diagnosis in this investigation"
   -Please clarify of delete.

7. I would prefer Standard Deviations (SD) instead of Standard Errors (SE) to describe the variation in a
continuous variable. 
-SE (or SEM) gives the variation of the calculated mean, and is highly dependent on the sample size.
-SD is better in that it gives to the reader an idea of the variation between the individuals (Table 1).

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

8. It would be interesting to know whether there is a correlation between the degree of depression and severity of preeclampsia.

9. As you say, the number of women with severe depression was very small.
   - Is there any reason to keep them as a separate group?
   - You could merge them into the moderate-severe group.
   - The term moderate-severe is a bit confusing and you could consider replacing it with another expression, such as considerable, major, etc.

10. Table 3 is very large.
   - Its impact related to its space is small.
   - In my opinion, you could eliminate Table 3 and extend the text on page 8 as needed (last paragraph of Results describing the contents of the table).

11. How about the number of Cesarean sections and deliveries with forceps/vacuum extractions?
   - Did you register the data?
   - These are important data to describe the material. They reflect obstetric practices in the hospitals.
   - Do cesareans and assisted vaginal deliveries have any impact on your results?

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

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 with regard to refereeing this article.

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