Reviewer's report

Title: What aspects of periods are most bothersome for women reporting heavy menstrual bleeding? Community survey and qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 3 November 2006

Reviewer: Sioban Harlow

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a very interesting and useful manuscript that adds to our understanding of how menstrual bleeding impacts women's quality of life.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. The numbers presented regarding the study sample are not consistent in the abstract (2833), methods (a random sample of 250 (is this 19*250=4750);4610 questionnaires) and results (2833). As written it is very confusing.
2. Please discuss the implications of the 61% response rate for your study results.
3. What is the distribution of heavy versus very heavy? Do the concerns of women with heavy versus very heavy differ? (Please provide table 1 divided by Heavy and Very Heavy). If the distributions differ that would be of clinical importance.
4) Please clarify whether any guidance/definition was provided regarding what was "heavy" versus "Very heavy" versus neither heavy or very heavy? Eg does the % that dont report a problem differ across categories?
5) Does the perception of problem for heavy/veryheavy differ from women who report lighter bleeding? Do you have this information. It would be useful to know if 30% of all women see pain as a problem with their period.
6) Do you have information about whether women sought care? Is there a way to understand the linkage between your data and what women seek care for?
7) It is not clear that volume of loss is "rejected" clinically -- volume vs predictability vs gushing does provide important information relevant to understanding clinical risk (eg anemia) and type of intervention that may be needed to address a woman's concern. Discussion on page 11 is overstated. Lack of information in this study about what these women mean by heavy/very heavy is a problem that needs to be addressed in the discussion and lessens the value of the research.

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
1) Category of irregularity/duration of period/spotting perhaps should have a different label than "irregularity"

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests