Reviewer's report

Title: Mothers’ Experiences in the Nurse-Family Partnership Program: A Qualitative Case Study

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Reviewer: Ruth Paris

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Overall, this is a well-written manuscript on a topic that is very important to the home visiting field. The focus on a qualitative evaluation of the Nurse Family Partnership program is useful, as the NFP is a popular evidence-based approach to home visiting for high risk pregnant mothers and infants. My main concern is the fact that the authors do not specify the unique aspects of the NFP program as compared to other home visiting interventions, and by doing this they lose the opportunity to advance the field with necessary details. At this point there have been many evaluation studies of a variety of home visiting programs, often with qualitative components. Some of the other programs use professionals from other disciplines and often they utilize paraprofessional as home visitors. The field vitally needs the detailed information about the differences between programs that use nurses as home visitors and those that do not. Findings similar to those in this manuscript have been reported a number of times before (e.g. Krysik et al, 2005; Paris & Dubus, 2005, Paris, 2008; Hebbeler & Gerlach-Downie, 2002) although the interventions were not executed by nurses. Building on these studies is the best approach the authors can take. At this point, the broader field is barely addressed and the authors incorrectly infer that only NFP has documented success (page 4).

In order to improve the paper and respond to the current questions in the field the authors should distinguish the similarities and differences among the various fields involved with home visiting. The lit review should highlight this and the findings could follow, with statements about similar qualitative findings in other programs. I think it’s fine to have some repetition and replication of findings with different populations, but this needs to be stated and then taken further. What are the new findings here? It seems that the nurses medical knowledge is particular to NFP and should be highlighted. The supportive nature of the relationship, home-based services, new knowledge, etc have been described before and should be understood in that light. Ideally, good articles evaluating programs should move the field forward and help practitioners tease out the salient domains that should be mandatory parts of interventions and minimize or remove those that are less useful. The question that typically arises is the necessity of having a nurse be the home visitor. Given that so many other programs use paraprofessionals, the authors should address the benefits that nurses provide over and above paraprofessionals according to their findings. In these days of cost-effective services, researchers must address the reality of service provision and have clear arguments for resources spent.
I think this is a good paper but it could be better and push the field forward in a clearer way. My suggestions focus on this goal. The lit review is good, but it incorrectly states (p. 4) that primarily nurse home visiting programs have been shown to be effective. I don’t think ignoring a large literature about program effectiveness in home visiting with other professionals and paraprofessionals is useful or accurate. There are too many other disciplines involved in home-visiting with the same goals as NFP. There is a debate in the field about effectiveness, but NFP is in no way the only program demonstrating change in many domains. I think that this article would move the field forward if the authors

**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 have no competing interests to report.