Reviewer's report

**Title:** Improving inpatient postnatal services: midwives views and perspectives of engagement in a quality improvement initiative

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 10 September 2011

**Reviewer:** Virginia Schmied

**Reviewer's report:**

This is a well written, interesting paper that makes an important contribution to a field of research 'postnatal care' where there is little available literature on how to make improvements in care particularly in-hospital postnatal care.

There are only minor discretionary improvements from my perspective.

The aim of the paper or the question addressed is not as clearly defined as it could be. In the abstract, the authors state "As part of a system and process approach to improving care at one maternity unit in south of England, the views and perceptions of midwives responsible for implementing change were sought". It is not exactly clear in this statement - what views and perceptions were being sought. Then again in the 1st paragraph prior to Methods, starts... This paper presents data on the views of midwives from one large .... but the statement also is not clear exactly what midwives' views and perspectives were being sought.

I believe that the title of the paper probably more accurately reflect the focus of the paper and perhaps this working could be used in stating the aim or purpose of the paper.

The authors appropriately draw on literature related to improvements in postnatal care together with literature reporting the facilitators or barriers to quality improvement in health care.

In the section 'planning the improvement initiative" the authors overview approaches to ascertaining the views of midwives and stakeholders including women in relation to the barriers and facilitators of effective postnatal care. However there is no detail here on who participated, the numbers and characteristics of these participants. I understand that this is not the focus of this paper and in the case of women has been published elsewhere, have the outcomes from the focus groups and interviews with health professionals also been presented elsewhere. This would be useful to know in relation then to the strategies that are outlined in the next section.

I found it particularly helpful that the authors provided detail on the innovations in practice.

Suggest a sub heading may be needed where the discussion of methods moves from the quality improvement section to the description of the questionnaire.
The findings from the question are well described. The paper reports descriptive data and gives a few open ended responses to illustrate the views of midwives.

The discussion examines the implementation of change or quality improvement initiatives in both the specific context of postnatal care as well as the broader context of quality improvement.

**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'