Reviewer’s report

Title: Evaluation of primary care midwifery in the Netherlands: design and rationale of a dynamic cohort study (DELIVER)

Version: 1 Date: 20 December 2011

Reviewer: Stephanie Brown

Reviewer’s report:

1. Will the study design adequately test the hypothesis?

The authors outline three broad research questions and list major variables of interest in the background to the methods.

I would like to see a much more detailed exposition of study hypotheses within the section outlining study methods. It would also be useful for the authors to specify primary outcomes and provide information regarding study power to assess differences in outcomes related to study hypotheses taking into account the cluster design and potential attrition for the second and third follow-up.

I note that 14 out of 20 practices initially approached to participate declined participation. Information is not provided to indicate how many practices ultimately were approached in order to achieve a sample of 20 practices. I would encourage the authors to provide this information and to comment on potential implications of selection bias in relation to practices that agreed to participate.

Were a priori power calculations undertaken, and did these take into account the cluster design? If not, it would be appropriate to include post hoc calculations for primary outcomes.

2. Are sufficient details provided to allow replication of the work or comparison with related analyses: if not, what is missing?

Further detail is required regarding primary outcomes, how these will be ascertained and timing of data collection for each data item. The listing of standardised instruments is not sufficient for this purpose.

3. Is the planned statistical analysis appropriate?

Very limited information is included regarding planned analyses. This section needs to be expanded to include:

- analysis methods for assessing major study hypotheses
- further details regarding the way in which cluster sampling will be taken into account in analyses
- what steps will be taken to address potential selection bias (e.g. stratified and/or weighted analyses)
4. Is the writing acceptable?

Overall the paper is well written.

On page 7, the word ‘voluntarily’ is incorrect, and should read ‘Client participation was voluntary’.
Also on page 7, the first sentence in the paragraph regarding incentives requires editing.

The discussion section lacks clarity with regard to key messages and introduces new information not reported in the results. For example, the information that 20% of completed questionnaires are print questionnaires. Given that this information is available I am surprised it has not been included in the reporting of results.
In addition

- It would be useful for the authors to comment on how they envisage that the data will be used to improve service delivery, and what avenues exist for knowledge translation.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare I have no competing interests