Author's response to reviews

Title: Risk of Infection and adverse outcomes among pregnant working women in selected occupational groups: A study in the Danish National Birth Cohort

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

We are very grateful for the comments which you, and the reviewers, have kindly made about our manuscript “**Risk of Infection and adverse outcomes among pregnant working women in selected occupational groups: A study in the Danish National Birth Cohort**”. Enclosed you will find a revision of the manuscript after considering all the reviewers’ comments. In this new version, we have attempted to rectify the shortcomings encountered. We highlighted the changes to our manuscript within the document. We here provide a point-by-point list of the reviewers’ comments and our response.

Best regards.

Yours sincerely,

María Morales Suárez-Varela.
Reviewer: Alberto Scarselli

Reviewer's report:

My comments and suggestions to improve the manuscript were taken into account adequately in this revised version. However, some minor questions remain open.

1) Reference no. 1 seems not to be adequate. The topic of the referenced study, in fact, is on the biological risk at work in Italy. Instead, the estimate cited in the text concerns the global burden of injury and illness due to occupational exposures. I think that the proper reference is: Driscoll T, Takala J, Steenland K, Corvalan C, Fingerhut M. Review of estimates of the global burden of injury and illness due to occupational exposures. Am J Ind Med 2005;48:491–502.

Thank you very much for this helpful suggestion. This reference should be changed accordingly.

2) The first three sentences of the Background section do not sound well. Please try to rewrite them in a more harmonious way.

3) Sentence “The aim of this study was to investigate if pregnancy outcomes are associated with more related infections”. The sense of this sentence is clear but I think the English language may be improved.

We agree with the reviewer in these comments. Thank you very much. These sentences have been completely rewritten.
4) The numbers on population in study are, now, well presented, with the use of a diagram. However, there are still some open questions: how many women were selected from the DNBC? The starting number of the population in study is 87,708. But, from the numbers in the text it results to be 87,713 (pages 5-6). Indeed: 90,301 are the women had participated in the first interview; then (2,425+93+42+24+3+1)=2,588 were excluded from the study for some reasons; but 90,301-2,588=87,713 and not 87,708. Please clarify this point. This selection procedure may be inserted also in the diagram (figure 1).

5) In the figure 1, I think that the number of “Unemployed women” is 18,071 and not 4,260 as it is wrote. If I am correct, please clarify this point.

6) Page 6. Sentence beginning with “The occupation of 83,448 women as …” This number seems to be wrong. The right number should be 65,377.

Thank you for helping us with finding these writing errors. We have now reported the right numbers on the study population in the methods section, and in the figure 1.

7) Page 11, line 17. The sentence “Many people employed in the health care sector are exposed to a wide variety of contagious diseases and the diversity of potentially infectious agents continues to increase so these associations need not be caused by infections” is difficult to understand. Please rewrite it.

We have followed this helpful suggestion and this sentence has been completely rewritten.

8) The discussion on limits and potential bias of the study is still not exhaustive. The authors should make a little extra effort to make the discussion on these
points a little more articulate (for example, regarding the interview-related bias and the self reported bias).

Following this suggestion the paragraph commenting the weaknesses of the study has been completed.

9) The authors cite other factors related to working with patients or children that might act as confounding (page 12, line 20). Please make some examples.
Thank you very much. We have included some examples (and references).

10) Tables are still difficult to read (numbers are sometimes divided into two lines). Please, try to better format them for a better reading.
11) Page 8, line 22: “20.”. Please, insert a digit (“20.0”) or delete the dot (“20”).
12) Page 12, line 6: “affect y women”. Please correct the error.
13) References no 18 and no 32 are equal. Delete one.
14) In Table 3 and Table 4, specify that “All anomalies” are “All Congenital Anomalies (CAs)” (tables must be self-explanatory).

Thank you very much. We have now corrected all these minor essential revisions and we thank the reviewer for his thoroughness.