Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 29 October 2010

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.

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.

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.

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.

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).

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.

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).

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

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.