Reviewer's report

Title: Midwife-led debriefing after operative birth: four to six year follow-up of a randomised trial [ISRCTN24648614]

Version: 2 Date: 12 December 2005

Reviewer: Ellen Hodnett

Reviewer's report:

General

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

Yes. It is an important, well-defined question.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

In general, yes, but I would recommend more detail on the methods used to trace and follow-up the trial participants.

Also, did the investigators consider collecting data by telephone from those who failed to return questionnaires but were contacted by phone?

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?

Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

In general, yes, but I would like the authors to include a table comparing responders to non-responders in terms of demographic characteristics, delivery outcomes, and EPDS scores at 6 months post delivery. A simple statement that there were no statistically significant differences is not particularly reassuring. There could be differences that are potentially important but did not quite meet the conventional criteria for statistical significance.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Yes

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Yes

7. Is the writing acceptable?

Yes. The manuscript is very well-written and succinct.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can
be reached)

1. A little more detail regarding methods of follow-up
2. A table (as noted above) describing responders and non-responders.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

None

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Consider including a sentence or two to explain why you did not try to collect data by telephone from those who failed to return questionnaires.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.