Author's response to reviews

Title: Views of pregnant women and clinicians regarding discussion of exposure to phthalate plasticizers

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr José M. Belizan,

MS: 6134911321083778

Thank you for your insightful review of our manuscript, “Views of pregnant women and clinicians regarding discussion of exposure to phthalate plasticizers”. We have made the minor revisions to the paper as indicated by yourself and Dr. Yoshinaga in the Introduction and at the beginning of the Discussion section. Below I have indicated how I have incorporated Dr. Yoshinaga’s suggested major revisions.

**Introduction**
We have separated and reorganized the human and animal research for greater clarity as Dr. Yoshinaga suggested.

**Methods**
We have added to the Methods section the information supplied to research participants in a pamphlet before and at the beginning of their interview. Regarding whether the same information was provided to the pregnant women and medical staff, this indeed was the case and this has been made clear as Dr. Yoshinaga suggested in the Method section. There was a series of interview prompts that the interviewers could use in order to promote conversation with the research participants if they were hesitant to speak or to elaborate their thoughts. In qualitative research we try to let the participants to speak freely for as long as they want and only use the prompts if their opinions in these areas are not already covered. I have indicated this in the Methods section and added Table 1 that lists the potential prompts that could be used.

**Results**
The research strategies used to generate these results were highly rigorous and internationally accepted empirical qualitative analytical methods as indicated and referenced in the Methods section. The presentation is indeed subjective rather than objective as Dr. Yoshinaga points out, as is all qualitative research, even the most rigorous like ours, but qualitative research allows researchers to investigate complex issues in a deep and meaningful way not possible through more objective yet thinner survey research. The results are presented in the standard fashion for qualitative research in biomedical journals. Rigorous qualitative analysis is not designed for, nor can it present quantitative findings such as “the number of providers with positive and negative attitude”. The number of research participants is substantial for qualitative analysis.

**Discussion**
I have added a paragraph to the Discussion section to clarify that the results emanate from the comments of the research participants who volunteered for this study and that the methodology promotes the presentation for all perspectives in a balanced manner. I have added an introductory paragraph to the Discussion section summarizing the main research findings as you suggested. I also have added a paragraph to the Discussion section clarifying the reasons for using a qualitative analytical approach as well as a paragraph indicating the limitations of even the most rigorous qualitative research even though the insights are substantial for readers of Reproductive Health.
Sincerely,

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