Author's response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of a strict protocol approach in managing women with severe disease due to hypertension in pregnancy: A descriptive study.

Authors:

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Version: 2 Date: 5 August 2005

Author's response to reviews: see over
Evaluation of a strict protocol approach in managing women with severe disease due to hypertension in pregnancy: A descriptive study."
by Hennie Lombaard, Robert C Pattinson, Fébé Backer, Peter Macdonald.

Reviewer: P Lumbiganon

I have the following comments and suggestions for your consideration:

1. Title; it is a "before and after" not "descriptive" study. Done
2. Methods:
   - It would be better to give more information about the study population e.g. total population, birth rate, MMR, perinatal mortality rate, etc. Done
   - It would be better to use RR or Odds ratio and 95% confidence Interval comparing all outcomes between the two periods rather than p-value. Done
   - it would be better to describe criteria to diagnose organ system failure rather than giving the information about what evaluations were performed. Done
3. Results; Report RR or OR and 95% CI as suggested in the method part. Done
4. Discussion;
   - 1st paragraph should also include "more immune system failure" done
   - Should discuss the limitation from this study design that could not control other factors that might have effects on outcomes. Done
5. Abstract: Data do not support the conclusion "reduction in mortality index" Done
additional comments:
General:
- the paper is difficult to read - it is not clear what is the strict management protocol; done
- the English needs revision: Done
page 11: 'The fetus was delivered by caesarean....' are those all the indications? Yes, for elective caesarean section without any other obstetric indication for operative delivery what is an abnormal ductus venosous waveform? Done, I have decribed what we regarded as abnormal in the text.
- sonar: should be ultrasonography done
references: check ref 13 (font) done
Reviewer's report
Title: Evaluation of a strict protocol approach in managing women with severe disease due to hypertension in pregnancy: A descriptive study.
Version: Date: 1 June 2005
Reviewer: Lale Say
Reviewer's report:
General

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

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Better to summarize the elements of strict protocol as a table done, maybe together with the previous protocol (if exist). This will ease the reading and understanding as compared to the narrative as it is now.
2. Results section, first para: it is better to provide case-fatality rates instead of MMR for complications of hypertension - if possible. We are not able to give case fatality rates as we do not have the denominators.
3. Provide the relative risks of comparisons in table 2 - with their confidence intervals Done
In addition needs very careful English editing

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
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

The English was revised and additional tables inserted to make the current strict protocol clearer. I have also add a table on organ system dysfunction and add details on the previous protocol.