Author's response to reviews

Title: Using a Cesarean Section Classification System based on characteristics of the population as a way of monitoring obstetric practice

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor of the
Reproductive Health

Dear Sir

We are submitting the revised version of our manuscript entitled “Using a cesarean section classification system based on characteristics of the population as a way of monitoring obstetric practice” to Reproductive Health. I would like to thank very much the reviewers who carefully appraised the manuscript and made suggestions that contributed a lot for its improvement.

Please find below, in bold, our answers and comments for each point just after the reviewer’s comments:

Reviewer’s report 1 (M. Robson):

I have read the paper with great interest. The principle of the study is excellent but the numbers are small. It is well referenced and the authors are knowledgeable about the classification but their results should be submitted differently in my opinion. If they did that, it would have been useful for the authors to compare their results with other units which they admit is one of the advantages of the system. They will be able to comment on the extraordinary differences in the results in some of the groups. Some of the previous papers they quote use the standard way of presenting the data and I would suggest they use the same method. It would give them far more information as well as an ability to interpret their results more accurately. In addition they should use absolute comparisons of caesarean sections as well not only relative.

We are in fact very pleased to realize that our manuscript was evaluated exactly by who was responsible for developing such classification. We recognize that the number of cases is relatively small, but unfortunately we can do nothing regarding that in this case. As previously explained, this specific data was collected during an audit and feedback study for three months before and three months after an intervention following its correspondent research proposal and already published elsewhere. We accepted the suggestion and changed completely the presentation of results, using the standard way previously recommended, what facilitated the comparison with other studies dealing with the topic available. As well, we used absolute comparisons of caesarean sections and not only relative.

I think the authors should be strongly encouraged to try for greater numbers and describe more specifically their changes in practice and in particular groups of women. I am very happy to help them if this was acceptable and happy for them to contact me on my e mail MRobson@nmh.ie

I enclose a small summary which shows the standard way of presenting the data in the 10 groups.
Thank you again for your availability. We are planning to use such classification again with other larger casuistic. We also included in the methods session some more details regarding the changes in practice included in the packet of interventions implemented.

Reviewer’s report 2 (IM Calderon):

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined? Yes. This theme is actual and interesting. OK.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work? No. The intervention’s program isn’t detailed on this paper. Although the authors considered the intervention well detailed in the previous publication, I would like to recommend a better description of the intervention’s program in this article. This is a discretionary revision. OK. Although the intervention is not the main focus in this study, we agree that a better description would help readers to understand what had been done. We included a paragraph on that in the methods session.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled? No. It is not clear whether the inclusion of 664 and 628 cases respectively in the first and the second period were representative and sufficient for the results, conclusions, and recommendation for others centers. I recommend that the authors consider the issue about the sample size and discuss it deeper. This is a major compulsory revision. OK, considerations regarding sample size estimates were included in the methods and discussion sessions. Regarding these numbers being representative and sufficient, they represent all deliveries occurring in the institution during the reference period.

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

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? No. I suggest the conclusions may be better adequate to objective of the study. This is discretionary revisions. OK.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? No. I suggest the objective of the summary to be replaced by the content of the last sentence of last paragraph of the introduction and thus, the title may be better adequate. This is a major compulsory revision. OK, done.

7. Is the writing acceptable? Yes. OK.

Sincerely yours

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