Reviewer’s report

Title: The growth of a culture of evidence-based obstetrics in South Africa: a qualitative case study

Version: 1 Date: 4 February 2011

Reviewer: João Paulo Souza

Reviewer’s report:

I read with interest the manuscript authored by Daniels et al. It is certainly a paper with importance in the field of evidence based obstetrics and it can help other countries to learn with the South African experience.

Minor Essential Revisions

I have nevertheless one concern with this study and I hope that the authors may be able further address it in the paper’s discussion. As presented in the paper, the case study was based on a triangulation of three data collection methods, and it is outstanding the contribution to the case study the interview of key informants. This is obviously a sound approach but it may be biased towards the academia or the evidence-based stakeholder community. In my opinion, it would be good to investigate how evidence-based obstetrics is perceived in non-academic settings or among those that should use the evidence-based knowledge in their clinical practice. It is not clear in the paper whether the culture of evidence-based obstetrics is restricted to the policy elite in that country or not. The implications of this limitation may be important and should be discussed. I also would like to suggest the authors to discuss their impression on how the culture of EB obstetrics translates into practice in South Africa.

Discretionary Revisions

In addition to that I would like to suggest the authors to rephrase one sentence in their introduction. They wonder "... why initiatives such as this [RHL] are not successful..." I found this interpretation a little bit tough. It may be more appropriate being more specific: "... why initiatives such as this, that disseminate evidence-based knowledge, may be not effective in changing clinical practice?"

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

RHL is mentioned in the manuscript and I comment on it in my review. I am
associate editor of RHL. Other than that, I declare that I have no competing interests.