Reviewer’s report

Title: The role of haematological indices in predicting early iron deficiency among pregnant women in an urban area of Sri Lanka

Version: 1 Date: 24 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Philip Crispin

Reviewer’s report:

Page references and line numbers refer to the total pdf, not the page numbers on the bottom right of the page.

Major suggestion:

There are variety or red cell indices that may be used to detect iron depletion according to these results, with the respective cut-offs determined from the ROC curve, but it lacks a clinical interpretation on their use. Should enhanced iron replacement and follow up be offered to women who have any one of the parameters below the suggested cut-off?

Minor edits

Suggested changes (suggested grammatical / typographical changes):

P7:15 was should be were

P8: which is a much

P11:14 needs revision for grammar.

P11: 21-22. The prevention recommendations of WHO are for universal iron replacement and not based on haemoglobin readings. The references cited are not the WHO guidelines as stated. Reference 19 is 20 year old guidelines and therefore not current, so should be removed. severe

P12:24. Which are a component

P13:11 ultrasound

P13:44 clarify exclusion criteria as women who have a multiple pregnancy or multiple past pregnancies.

P16:13-15, sensitivity and specificity probably shouldn't need to be explained.
P18:44. The authors note positive correlations between red cell indices and Hb and ferritin, but haven't stated in the method how correlations were to be performed. A test for normality has also been performed so should be reported.

P30: 6-10 needs grammatical editing.

High CRP is listed as an exclusion criteria twice and needs only to be stated once and the categorisation as iron deficient likewise only needs to be done in methods, not results (P17:13).

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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