Reviewer’s report

Title: Impact of singlehood during pregnancy on dietary intake and birth outcomes- a study in the Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study

Version: Date: 19 September 2014

Reviewer: Anne Britt Vika Nilsen

Reviewer’s report:

The article is interesting, and has an important message to those who work with lifestyle changes and health improvement. The authors could address more specifically, what was previously known and what does this study add?

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1) The discussion could be shorter and more clear and concise and more focused, the main finding was difference in the overall diet with regard to marital status. A recent study using data from the MoBa may be of interest to the authors:


2) The conclusion in the manuscript might go beyond what is supported by the data, the conclusion in the abstract is more precise. May be the two last sentences could be under clinical implications? (Dietary changes and smoking cessation have low cost.........) Thus smoking was not the included in the aim of the study, and the relationship between smoking and some adverse pregnancy outcomes are well known.

- Minor Essential Revisions

1) The inclusion of participants is clear and concise – figure 1 is fine. There is a large group of participants in the MoBa without marital status (n=1092). Larger than the two groups investigated (Single living alone n=909 and single living with parents n=218), have the authors tested the outcomes in this group?

2) Reference number 22 is should be more exact.

3) The article has many references; may some of them be removed? Which are most important in relation to the context?

4) Table1. Do the authors have any suggestion how to simplify the massive table?

Why decimals in the age categories? (I suggest: Maternal age (years), 20-24, 25-29, 30-34 and #35.)
For example; Income (NOK), and only the numbers below, the numbers are missing three zeros (150 =>150,000), and maybe some of the categories could be collapsed?

And: ‘Nausa (week XX)’, remove no, ‘Has felt depressed’, remove no).

Maybe the authors could mark those data which indicate mean and SD? Or change the order n or mean, % or SD.

6) Discussion (paragraph 6): A previous study reported that women participating in the MoBa had more age-related reproductive and physical health problems... this is not correct citation (reference number 59). The women, participating in the MoBa, giving birth at an advanced or very advanced age who had more age-related reproductive and physical health problems and that they composed of a heterogonous group, including those who are vulnerable (low education, unemployed, low income and single status). And these groups were underrepresented in the MoBa, as is stated by the authors (reference number 60).

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests