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: 1 Date: 23 September 2014

Reviewer: Sharon Kirkpatrick

Reviewer's report:

Major revisions

1. Although the authors note that many pregnant women do not have optimal diets, this is also true for the population at large. It would be useful to make a stronger case for examining diet in pregnancy, particularly among single women.

Overall, the discussion is well written but the introduction could use a stronger conceptual framework in order to allow readers to better follow the logic and the modeling. Perhaps consider moving some material from the discussion to the introduction to provide a stronger rationale - what is it about being a single mother that might correlate with poor diets and birth outcomes?

2. It seems that the diets of those living with parents are also not ideal. Isn't it then true that all pregnant women require particular attention with respect to dietary intakes and other factors associated with birth outcomes?

3. Lines 33-39: There is a bit of a jump in logic here. Is diet associated with SGA, LGA, preterm? Need to link diet to birth weight and then show links with later health.

4. Lines 42-44: Has the higher risk of these conditions been seen among the single parents themselves or among others in the household? Is this likely to reflect other correlates of living in a single parent home, such as SES?

Minor revisions:

5. Lines 33-34: Could be more specific here – which dietary patterns and foods?

6. Lines 40-42: Has the population also grown over this time? Has the proportion of children born to single mothers increased?

7. Lines 60-61: Were all pregnant women approached? If not, how were women to be invited to participate identified?

8. Line 101: Please define SGA, LGA, preterm.

9. Lines 102-108: Please indicate whether the operationalization of variables in consistent with prior research.
10. Line 109: Please provide a rationale for the other variables considered. Are these variables meant to account for systematic differences among the groups or to account for known confounding factors?

11. Abstract – not clear which is the referent group.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.