Reviewer's report

Title: Urinary Cortisol and Depression in Early Pregnancy: Role of Adiposity and Race

Version: 1 Date: 26 July 2014

Reviewer: Deepak Garg

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

Confusing aims and objectives.
Disorderly building up of discussion section.

Minor Essential revisions:

Edinburgh Depression Rating Scale is a screening tool hence in my opinion a more robust measure of diagnosis of depression e.g. face to face interview or other structured psychiatric interview schedules could be used. This creates a fundamental problem of ascertaining validity of the diagnosis.

I would recommend this to mentioned as a major limitation of this study which quite possibility is due to it being part of larger study.

In discussion section:

First paragraph-

It wasn’t a stated objective to investigate association of cortisol with PTB and LBW so please please mention it afterwards when you have discussed explanations for your main results. It appears to be out of place statement.

....... in contrast, plasma cortisol levels were negatively associated with several measures of maternal adiposity, and additional analysis revealed this relationship to be present only in the non-depressed non-obese pregnant black women....

Should it not be just non-depressed women???

Paragraph 1 on page 12 is not well written at all with repetition of facts and lines (last line is repeated twice).

Page 12 paragraph 2 first line ‘Pregnancy is a recognized transient hypercortisolemic state.[6]’.. this line has already been said 2 pages ago. No need to repeat.

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:

I declare that I have no competing interests