Reviewer's report

Title: The Impact of an Exercise Intervention on C-Reactive Protein During Pregnancy: a randomized controlled trial

Version: 3
Date: 27 February 2015

Reviewer: Anca Gaston

Reviewer's report:

BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth considers the following article types: Case report, Database, Debate, Research, Software, Study protocol and Technical advance articles. The journal does not generally consider narrative review articles.

When assessing the work, please consider the following points:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? YES
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? YES
3. Are the data sound? YES
4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation? YES
5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? YES
6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? YES
7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Limitations are acknowledged throughout the discussion but perhaps a limitations section could be added.
8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? YES
9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? YES
10. Is the writing acceptable? YES

- Major Compulsory Revisions
1) pg 7, line 8: You state that eligibility criteria included physical inactivity. How was "physically inactive" defined? Was it the reverse of ">30 minutes of moderate or vigorous intensity exercise on more than 3 days per week"? If so...how was this level of exercise chosen as it is not consistent with US guidelines for pregnant women (>150min of MVPA per week).
2) pg 8, line 19-20: Can you state what the actual goals were (i.e., provide the ACOG guidelines here?)
3) pg 9, line 10: What do you mean by "tailoring questionnaires"? I think I understand given the paragraph but not sure this is the best term.
4) pg 11, line 4-5: In classifying women as decreasing, maintaining, or increasing, was it necessary to decrease or increase by a certain amount to be in that category or even 1 min increase would still categorize women as ‘increasing’?

5) Limitations that you could consider adding: adherence to exercise program difficult to assess.

6) Something to consider: Some researchers/scientists take a hard stance regarding any statements which are not supported by statistically-significant findings. Some would say that a “a non-significant decrease…” is not a decrease but is rather no-change. I agree, however, that the trend is there in your work and is in line with expectations, just not strong enough. Perhaps you could build a stronger case about how these findings are not conclusive and how more research is necessary in order to draw stronger inferences regarding the relation between exercise and CRP in pregnant women.

- Minor Essential Revisions

1) Pg3, line 3: “…such as preeclampsia”

2) Pg3, line 10: might be worth indicating length of intervention in Abstract (i.e., Women were randomized to either an 12-week exercise intervention…)

**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'