Reviewer's report

Title: Exploring the views and experiences of callers to the PANDA Post and Antenatal Depression Association Australian National Perinatal Depression Helpline: a cross-sectional survey

Version: 1 Date: 1 May 2015

Reviewer: Dawn Kingston

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this important work. The paper is well-written. The topic is of critical importance, and the findings of this study provide highly valuable information to guide development and implementation of telephone-based support services for perinatal mental health. Given the lack of perinatal mental health services in most countries, the findings of this study reveal that peer-led telephone support of this nature offers a viable, relatively low-resource option for care that has broad reach.

Please consider the following revisions:

Abstract:

- One sentence on the survey would be beneficial e.g., if survey was developed for this study that would be a useful detail e.g., Developed for this study, the survey comprised xx questions using Likert-type scales to collect information about demographics, satisfaction and usability of the service. Thematic analysis was undertaken for responses to open-ended questions.

Line 69 – should perhaps be just 'a recent overview …' (versus of meta-analysis). This review was more of an overview but not a 'systematic' review of recent meta-analyses. Would reduce confusion that that paper was a systematic review of existing meta-analyses.

Overall – the background section could be tighter. For example, lines 69-76 (although important information) do not seem directly related to the research question, and form a bit of a tangent. Not sure this section is needed (detracts from the flow of argument you are making)

Similarly, lines 77-80 seem out of place and lines 81 through 97 make unique points, but unlinked to the research questions. So – overall, please make the background tighter in terms of creating a flow of information that supports and leads to the overall purpose of the paper

The discussion of interventions reads more like a separate literature review – unlinked to the purpose of the paper. I suggest tying in the peer support evidence more to the PANDA Post and Antenatal Dep Association discussion.

In the section describing PANDA -- Please describe where the PANDA helpline is
advertised e.g., how do women access it/learn about it, how widely advertised it is

- What was the rationale for survey completion 4-8 weeks post-contact, versus right after contact?
- More detail required re who and how were callers contacted. Did they consent to contact during initial contact?
- What was the expertise of colleagues who reviewed the survey?
- Was face/content validity assessed?
- Where were survey questions originally from e.g., were any from national surveys, for example
- Was the survey pilot tested on callers?
- How were survey reminders delivered?
- What measures were taken to reduce data entry error of hard copy surveys?
- What % of data were missing?
- Details of survey structure needed e.g., broadly, what topics did the survey cover, total # questions in the survey
- Good description of surveys returned/returned to sender etc
- How does the response rate of 30% compare to previous PANDA survey? Please describe under strengths and limitations.
- How do the demographics of this group compare to the general demographics of women delivering in Victoria?
- Just as a matter of interest, please report response rates also by mode of delivery e.g., email vs hard copy
- Please explain line 484 – what is meant by ‘reflective of a widespread reduction in responses in population-based surveys’

- Please add to the discussion a few points on differences between % of callers seeking help on postnatal vs antenatal mental health (e.g., 45% vs 14%)
- How do the findings match with PANDAs service vision e.g., it seems that most callers contacted for support, reassurance, and information. Was this the original design for PANDA? Are there areas of PANDAs service delivery model that are recommended based on the reasons for contact identified?
- Re number calls made to PANDA, I think it would be beneficial in Table 3 to identify the n/% of callers who called a single time. – therefore perhaps dividing the data into 1 call, 2 calls, 3-4, >=5
- Please add footnote to table 1 re remaining 20 women e.g., sample size 124, 104 accounted for in this table
were any data collected re follow-up e.g., if PANDA representative recommended a referral or resource, did the caller follow up? If so - please include in findings.

Under authors’ information…missing surnames?

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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