Reviewer's report

Title: Exploring the intangible costs associated with stillbirth: a structured review and synthesis of the evidence

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Reviewer: Therese Wiegers

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting study, more because of the cumulated knowledge of psycho-social and health related effects on parents and the wider family who experience a stillbirth, than because of possible economic, so-called 'intangible' costs.

The main objectives for the study are described as: i) identify the consequences (of stillbirth) and ii) describe their economic implications (lines 104-107).

The study succeeded more in reaching the first goal than the second. Because after reading the manuscript it is still not clear how to measure economic implications of a stillbirth.

I am not sure why the word 'evidence' is used in the title: you present a synthesis of the evidence... of what? in my view it is a synthesis of the available knowledge about the possible effects of a stillbirth. There has been no attempt to quantify the findings, as is mentioned in the discussion (line 403/4).

However, strong conclusions are made, that are not fully supported by the data presented. As main strength of this paper is written that it is the first that has explicitly determined the intangible costs of stillbirth. I would be more careful in my conclusion and say that it has identified possible sources of intangible costs. And on the next page the intangible costs are described as having a substantial contribution to the total costs. That conclusion cannot be verified, because the tangible costs have not been quantified.

The proposed questionnaire needs more explanation, not only regarding its development, but also regarding its goal to capture intangible costs and consequences. How do you propose to use a questionnaire like this? After the 'refinement' you suggest, would the questionnaire be used in a (large-scale) survey or for individual interviews?

The appendices are informative, maybe you can make more use of them in the main tekst.

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

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