Reviewer’s report

Title: A community development approach to support the emotional wellbeing of new mothers from Afghanistan living in Melbourne, Australia

Version: 2 Date: 12 April 2015

Reviewer: Shuby Puthussery

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Is the question posed by the authors well defined?

It is hard to decipher the exact focus of the research question. Is the study focusing on pregnancy and motherhood experiences of Afghan women living in Melbourne? Or is it their perceptions of factors contributing to their emotional wellbeing as is stated in the introduction? The results section begin with a discussion of the women’s experiences within formal maternity care settings which would imply yet another dimension.

The theoretical framework sounds ambiguous and board.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

The qualitative approach is appropriate for the study, and the adopted methods seem to be suitable overall. However, significant details are missing about the conduct of the interviews and focus group discussions. For example, what were the themes used in the interview schedule? What are the socioeconomic characteristics of the participants? How many participants were in each of the group discussions? How were these conducted? The method of analysis is also discussed at a very superficial level.

3. Are the data sound?

As stated above, the soundness of the data cannot be judged adequately based on the given information. The analysis seems to be quite superficial. There seem to be several claiming statements in the results section that are not adequately supported by the data. Here is an example Line [271-272 While they may ultimately accept Australian healthcare practices, this often involves a degree of cultural dissonance as women negotiate between competing cultural meanings around maternity care]. Although there is some indication in the given quote to supplement the first part of the quote, the second part is not supported by the data. The authors have to conduct an in-depth analysis of the data to decipher what the experiences actually imply. I am also not sure how the theoretical framework has been applied in analysing the data or interpreting the findings. There is very limited information about the socio economic characteristics of the participants; this hinders the readers ability to contextualise the experiences with individual circumstances that can have major impact on experiences.
4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation? NA

5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? NA

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

There is a reasonable level of discussion of the findings in the light of existing evidence although this could be much stronger. There is a good body of evidence on refugee women’s mental health internationally and the integration of this evidence would have enriched the discussions and added more meaning to the reported findings. It is also unclear how the study extends the existing evidence in the field.

7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?

Couple of limitations are discussed at a superficial level, but the section needs to be expanded as there seems to be other potential factors that could have possibly compromised the reliability of the findings.

8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

The authors have introduced the existing literature to some extent in the introduction section. Overall, the introduction section needs to be refurbished to have a better grounding in the international literature on the aspects covered in the study, to give a stronger contextual basis for the current study, both in terms of what is already known and what the study would potentially add. The evidence synthesis in the introduction looks to be rather descriptive with limited critique to identify the strength of the existing evidence and the gaps.

9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

The title is unfortunately problematic as it does not adequately reflect the focus of the study. It looks largely unclear what the community development approach implies or how it was applied as a key theoretical framework. The abstract also needs to be revised to a great deal to make it in line with the actual text.

10. Is the writing acceptable?

The text is reasonably well structured, and messages are fairly accessible.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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