Reviewer’s report

Title: A descriptive study of the health information needs of Kenyan women in the first 6 weeks postpartum

Version: 0 Date: 27 Jan 2017

Reviewer: Mary Carolan-Olah

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Review

Although it is clear that the author/s have put a lot of work into this paper, it nonetheless is confusing to read and has a number of critical flaws. I feel that it requires considerable reshaping before it could be considered for publication.

The main difficulties are as follows:

1. Although the study is labelled a descriptive study of 'health needs of mother-baby pairs' this does not seem to match what was done. To me the term 'health needs' would suggest an emphasis on physical health, such as care of an episiotomy/ tear or caesarean wound, lactation and avoiding mastitis; dealing with anaemia; postpartum morbidity and dealing with minor problems in the newborn, such as mild neonatal jaundice, conjunctivitis.

   In contrast, the themes seem to relate more to (1) the experience of birth; (2) routine care of the newborn; (3) dissatisfaction with health care workers; and (4) quality of information.

2. The methodology is very confusing. See for greater detail under methods.

Specific comments

Abstract

It needs to be clear very early in the abstract that the study took place in Keyna. Kenya should also appear in the title.

The first statement is not generic as the number of maternal and neonatal deaths occurring in developed nations is very small.
Replace 'interview was done' with interview was conducted

Enumerate the themes for clarity

In the conclusion, the term new mothers suggests primiparous women although they numbered just 5 in the study.

Background

Reference 1 should be replaced with a more general international reference.

Line 16 needs a supporting reference as that is a very strong statement about low use of postnatal care.

Although it is interesting to outline the maternal and neonatal mortality rates in Kenya, it is also important to keep it in context. My understandingis that the majority of maternal deaths relate to haemorrhage and sepsis, neither of which are preventable by postnatal care.

Paragraph 2- you write of low uptake of postnatal services but it is not clear what services are routinely available to women and how accessible services are.

Why contrast the situation in Kenya with Indonesia. They are so different culturally and geographically. Is there no information available on other African countries. If the Indonesian literature is used then it must be explained- other developing nation? Etc.

Line 51- legal and policy infrastructure- not clear what this refers to?

p.4 line 10- Is Family Care International an NGO?- some explanation of this organisation is required.

p.4 line 17-18 this sentence is unclear. How does the reference support that statement?

The background section is devoted to the importance of postnatal services and their value in detection and treating illness like diarrheal disease. There is no section about health needs of mothers and newborns, which is the focus of your study. At the very least, you should outline the health needs of this group.
Methods

It seems that Colazzi's phenomenology was the method but there is no description of the approach or why it was chosen. At the very least you would need to describe the method, indicate its philosophical roots and characteristics and describe why it was a suitable approach for your study. The sample is also not consistent with this approach as a more homogenous approach would be fitting. Why such a variety across parity? The method involves the scrutiny of participants lived experience to develop a greater understanding of the phenomenon, in this case the health needs of postnatal mothers and babies. Purposive sampling and the selection of a group that would likely have similar experiences, such as primiparous women, would be more appropriate.

Although the author/s write that Colazzi's data analysis method was used, the seven steps are not enumerated and both the sample and study details are inconsistent with this approach.

It seems to me that the study was a simple thematic analysis of qualitative interviews of a diverse sample of postnatal women.

The interview questions need to be provided in the paper, as the responses indicate that the questions were not focussed on health needs.

As above, the themes seem to relate more to (1) the experience of birth; (2) routine care of the newborn; (3) dissatisfaction with health care workers; and (4) quality of information. There needs to be an alignment between the study intent and the findings and this is a critical point to address.

Discussion

The discussion needs much greater structure and should commence with a statement about study intent and study findings.

Major findings should be then contrasted to the literature and it should be clear to the reader when the author is discussing the current study or the literature. At present, this is not the case.

p. 12 lines 29-58, this section appears to go beyond the study findings. Were in your data does emotional, practical and network support appear?
1.52- how is oxygen administration part of postnatal care?

There is no section addressing the study strengths and limitations.

Conclusion

Paragraph 2 p.14 lines 22-43- this section reads like an 'implications for practice section' and does not belong in the discussion. There are never references in the conclusion.

My suggestion is to include this section at the end of the restructured discussion.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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