Reviewer’s report

Title: Infant feeding practices within a large electronic medical record database

Version: 2 Date: 07 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Rachael Wood

Reviewer's report:

This study used maternity hospital discharge records (from one hospital in Ontario) linked to subsequent well baby check up notes held in primary care electronic patient records (from selected practices across Ontario) to assess (a) the feasibility of using these data sources to identify population based information on infant feeding and (b) to examine rates of exclusive breastfeeding over time (2-6 months) and by maternal and infant characteristics.

The paper has been reviewed previously by other reviewers hence I am keeping my comments to a minimum to avoid placing an undue burden on the authors. Broadly this seems a carefully conducted study that will be worthy of publication once the following comments are addressed.

My main concern (echoing that of one of the previous reviewers) is that I am still unclear on some of the details of the methodology.

As I read it, the methods state that the study sample was limited to infants who had at least one primary care record at age up to 750 days (8815 infants). Firstly, it is not clear why the 750 day cut off was used as the study only examined feeding status up to 6 months. This should be clarified.

Then, for these infants, all primary care visits up to 750 days were examined to see first if they contained a well baby check up Rourke record. For those visits specifically, automated extraction of data on infant feeding status was conducted. If no feeding data was extracted by the algorithm, and for all other visits that did not contain a Rourke record, manual chart review and extraction of feeding status where available was undertaken. Following this process a total of 7771 infants had at least one record with infant feeding status available at age up to 750 days. No information on the total number of visits is presented.

It is then unclear in the paper which visits were used to determine infant feeding status at the specific ages presented. For example, the authors' response to the previous reviewer suggests that, to determine feeding status at 2 months, it was any visits at age 60-121 days, with the visit closest to 60 days chosen for infants who had >1 visit in that age window. It is particularly unclear which visits were used to determine feeding status at 6 months. The paper suggests it was visits from 182 days but the upper age limit is unclear. Surely it wasn't 750 days? The first sentence of the results introduces a new upper age limit of 190 days but it is unclear what that refers to. This should definitely be clarified in the paper.

My only other substantive comment relates to the first sentence of the conclusions. This introduces data on overall (rather than exclusive) breastfeeding that are not presented elsewhere in the paper. The authors should either present full results on overall as well as exclusive feeding
(eg by adding an additional table effectively replicating Table 2 but showing rates of overall breastfeeding - which I think would be helpful) or remove this statement.

**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.

Yes

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

Yes

**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.

I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?
5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal