Author’s response to reviews

Title: Management and obstetric outcomes of 17 heterotopic interstitial pregnancies

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Author’s response to reviews:

January 24, 2018

Prof. Andrew C Breeze

BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth

Re: MS# PRCH-D-17-00967 “Management and obstetrics outcomes of 17 heterotopic cornual pregnancies after embryo transfer”
Dear Prof. Andrew C Breeze,

Thank you for your letter about our manuscript (MS# PRCH-D-17-00967). According to the reviewers’ and your suggestions, we have carefully revised our manuscript. We hope that the modified manuscript has come up to the standards expected by BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

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Response to Reviewers

Reviewer #1: Essentially a very good article that is very topical.

Answer: We have substantially revised the manuscript as suggested.

Reviewer #2:

I reviewed with interest the manuscript entitled: "Management of obstetrics outcomes of 17 heterotopic cornual pregnancies". Below is my review of the paper as submitted.
General comments:

This retrospective analysis looked at the management and outcomes of women diagnosed with heterotopic cornual pregnancies from July 2010 to December 2015. The study has merit, not least a large number of cases of a rare condition, and addresses an area of clinical and research relevance. Nevertheless, there are some fairly fundamental issues with the paper.

While I can appreciate the difficulties of writing a paper in a foreign language, there is a need for significant language revision.

I prefer the term 'interstitial pregnancy' rather than 'cornual pregnancy' to describe a pregnancy that has implanted in the interstitial portion of the Fallopian tube, as it is more anatomically accurate and specific.

The term 'miscarriage' should be used instead of 'abortion'. Abortion should be reserved for termination of pregnancy.

Answer: We tried our best to have polished the English under the guidance of Prof. Anna Haestier (Reviewer #1). In addition, we have also had our manuscript modified by an experienced Chinese doctor who had studied in USA for 5 years and have published over 30 articles in international journals.

Specific comments:

Title

It should be 'obstetric outcomes', not 'obstetrics outcomes'.

Answer: We changed “obstetrics outcomes” to “obstetric outcomes” as suggested (the title of the manuscript).
Abstract

P2 line 10 - I would restructure the sentence as follows "The aim of this study was to investigate the outcomes of women diagnosed with heterotopic interstitial pregnancies". The study is neither designed nor powered to assess or clarify the optimal treatment strategy.

Answer: The suggestion is helpful. We revised the relevant content on page 2, lines 5-6.

P2 line 44 - I would restructure the sentence as follows "In the follow-up study, 13 of the 14 women who had an ongoing intrauterine pregnancies delivered healthy live babies vaginally or by Cesarean section. The other woman was diagnosed with a miscarriage".

Answer: Prof. Anna Haestier (Reviewer #1) also mentioned this issue. We revised the relevant content on page 2, lines 19-22.

P2 line 22 - The sentence starting "Maternal general….." needs complete restructuring.

Answer: We restructure the sentence as suggested (page 2, lines 8-11).

Introduction

P4 line 15 - I do not see the value of referencing serum hcg here.

Answer: We deleted the relevant content in the revised manuscript (page 4, line 7).

P4 line 46-54 - see earlier comment

Answer: This comment is similar to the earlier comment on the section of “Abstract”. We revised the relevant content as suggested (page 4, lines 19-21).
Material and methods

There needs to be some description of how the cases were retrieved. Is there a denominator for the total number of pregnancies seen during this time?

Answer: The comment is constructive. We added the relevant content in the revised manuscript (page 5, lines 1-7).

Data collection

P5 line 47 - I am uncertain why data was acquired as to whether the current pregnancy had been conceived naturally or by ART, when the title of the study implies it was only looking at pregnancies conceived after embryo transfer.

Answer: The suggestion is helpful. In this retrospective study, a total of 17 women diagnosed with heterotopic interstitial pregnancy were analyzed. It is worth noting that all the 17 women achieved the current pregnancy by in-vitro fertilization and embryo transfer, but no one conceived a child naturally. Therefore, we modified the “title” in the revised manuscript.

P6 line 46 - I would use 'miscarriage' instead of 'abortion'.

Answer: We changed “abortion” to “miscarriage” in the revised manuscript (page 6, line 21 and others in the manuscript).

There needs to be a much more detailed description of the face-to-face interviews. Why were they performed? How was intelligence assessed? How was language assessed? At what age were the interviews conducted? Who performed the infant assessments? Could all this information have been gleaned over the telephone? Is gender an important outcome?

Answer: The comment is constructive. We made a detailed description of the face-to-face interview as suggested (page 6, lines 18-25 and page 7, lines 1-6). In the present study, the
child’s gender was not an important outcome, but it was presented as demographic data. In addition, we invited each patient to a face-to-face interview to investigate the obstetric outcome and evaluate the child’s growth and development.

Statistical analysis

P7 line 19 - I was unable to see any p values in the paper.

Answer: With consulted with a statistician, we carefully revised the paragraph on statistical analysis and added the relevant content in the revised manuscript accordingly (page 7, lines 10-12 and page 8, lines 15-19).

Results

There is a lot of duplication between the results section and the tables. I would use more tables rather than more prose but they need to be more succinct and easier to interpret.

Answer: We tried our best to make the description succinctly and easier to interpret (The section of “Results”).

Discussion

The strengths of the study must be discussed

Answer: We added the relevant content in the revised manuscript (page 9, lines 18-25).

P11 line 59 - the word 'extremely' is not needed.

Answer: We deleted the word “extremely” as suggested (page 12, line 2).
Table 1
This table needs a different format. A table spread over 5 pages is impractical.

Replace 'orifice of the uterus' with 'cervix'

Answer: We revised the format of “Table 1” and changed “orifice of the uterus” to “cervix” as suggested.

Table 2
This table adds little. I would either remove it or have a comparison of laparoscopy and laparotomy with each being a separate column and the data being grouped together as a range and a median.

Answer: The comment is constructive. We deleted the “Table 2” and revised the relevant content in the revised manuscript (page 8, lines 15-19).

References
The same font and type size must be used throughout

Answer: We revised the format of “References” as requested.