Reviewer’s report

Title: Antenatal depressive symptoms and early initiation of breastfeeding in association with exclusive breastfeeding 6 weeks postpartum: a longitudinal population-based study

Version: 1 Date: 30 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Heather Sipsma

Reviewer's report:

I thank the authors for their thoughtful responses to my comments. I appreciated their efforts and thought that overall the responses were strong. At this point, I have just a few additional suggestions for their consideration:

I appreciate the authors' response to Comment 10. Another approach would be to name these as direct and indirect effects, instead of the "direct effect…plus the effect mediated through mediators."

I do not necessarily agree with the authors' rationale for stratifying by delivery mode in Comment 11. Believing that delivery mode is associated with late breastfeeding initiation (the exposure) is rationale for considering it as a potential confounder; in this case, including it in the multivariable model as a control is reasonable. If, on the other hand, the authors hypothesized that the relationship between late breastfeeding initiation and exclusive breastfeeding at 6 weeks was moderated by delivery mode, then the stratification seems warranted. At this point, the stratum-specific relationships do not tell us much, particularly because the sample sizes are small for the emergency and planned c-sections and thus this analysis lacks statistical power. Given the lack of strong rationale to do so and the issue with sample sizes within strata, I recommend that the authors exclude this post-hoc analysis from their paper as it contributes little information and raises additional questions.

I appreciate the authors' response to Comment 12 ("For the whole cohort, 81.3% of those giving consent to participate complete the questionnaire in gestational week 32 and 80.9% at 6 weeks postpartum"), but I think this information needs a bit further clarification. Please indicate if the 80.9% retained at 6 weeks postpartum is among all those who initially consented to participate or among the group who completed the questionnaire at 32 weeks gestation.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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?
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Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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I am able to assess the statistics

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