Reviewer's report

Title: Maternal body mass index and risk of neonatal adverse outcomes in China: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 1 Date: 04 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Angela Vinturache

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. This is a revised version of the initial submission. Most of the issues have been addressed in this version following the concerns raised by the previous reviewers.

Specific Comments

Abstract:

Pooled statistics were derived from Stata/SE, ver. 12.0 - This is an ambiguous statement. Pooled statistics were used for what? STATA software was used for the analysis.

The conclusion does not align with the aim of the study. I believe the conclusion is that raised pre-pregnancy BMI is associated with adverse neonatal outcomes. The analysis from this manuscript did not look at the management of obesity. There are two issues with the statement "Reasonable treatment for maternal weight to avoid maternal underweight, overweight or obesity" : 1) it is incorrect in the sense that there is no treatment to my knowledge for weight; at the most there is some management guidelines that refer to adjustments of lifestyle and diet; 2) the statement is unclear, general, and confusing: what is reasonable?

Body of the manuscript:

There is still a challenge along this manuscript, from title to the Discussion section, in defining the outcomes of this study: maternal vs obstetrical vs neonatal. The authors should check the manuscript and make the necessary changes.

Page 5: is row data or raw data? There are several grammar errors along the manuscript. I trust the authors will attend to those.
Page 5: In the sentence "Odds ratios and the 95% confidence interval were synthesized for the dichotomous outcomes from of each study" the verb synthesized does not seem the best choice. Please find a better word to define what the action was in this sentence.

In the narrative review of papers not included in the metaanalysis the authors mention a large study of the association between maternal BMI and the risk of PTB. Whereas the authors offer an explanation on why those studies were not included one cannot wonder what would have been the impact of those numbers on the results of the present study. I maintain the opinion of the reviewer who challenged the authors selection criteria to consider eligible only the studies with sample sizes higher than 1000.

Overall, the Discussion section is very thin, findings little discussed in the context of the literature. Even more so when compared with the amount of results presented.

The first paragraph of the Discussion should be moved down in the section, which should start a summary of the findings before moving on to stress the significant or novel ones.

The "Elective and medical PTB" describe the same term, iatrogenic PTB. On page 11, the statement about the caesarean sections is among the discussion about maternal BMI and PTB, distracting the reader from the problem at hand. C section rates should be included in a separate section. However, the paper was focusing on neonatal outcomes.

The term "optimistic results" refer to significant results? Probably this would be a better term, as it is unclear what is optimistic in the relationship between the neonatal outcomes and mother's body weight. The strengths and limitations section is also modest in presentation.

The Conclusion contains some general statements that require a re-write based on the findings of the study.
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?
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.

I recommend additional statistical review

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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