Author’s response to reviews

Title: Birthing the placenta: women’s decisions and experiences

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Author’s response to reviews:

COVER LETTER

Dear Editor

Re: response to reviewer feedback on manuscript.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the reviewer comments and improve our manuscript. Please find the manuscript and response to the reviewers attached. Changes have been highlighted in the revised submission.

In addition to addressing reviewer comments, two minor edits have been made. Firstly, author initials have been amended in the ‘author’s contribution’ details to correct an error (p.33). Secondly, reference no.7 has been updated to the recently updated Cochrane review (p.34). Both changes have been highlighted in the revised manuscript.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards

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REVIEWER RESPONSE

Dear Reviewers

Thank you for your valuable feedback on our manuscript. Your comments and suggestions have enabled us to improve the quality of the paper. Please refer to the table below detailing the action taken in response to your feedback. Changes have been highlighted in the revised manuscript.

REVIEWER #1

Comment:

This manuscript was a pleasure to read as well as proving original research in an area of expanding interest.

Response:

Thank you.

Comment:

The storyline flows extremely well but what I would like to see is a little more information about the methods/methodology. This is extremely brief. For example qualitative research underpinned by feminist theory covers a huge range and I would like a paragraph or two on more detail.

How were the themes derived?

What made this study feminist?

How could you be sure that the women had no medication during labour?

Were all the participants local, or national? With Fb recruitment they could come from anywhere.

Other fine detail such as this would enhance the rigour of the study.

Response:

Further details provided regarding how themes were derived (p. 7, line 150-155)
Details supporting the statement that the study is feminist can be found in the background (p. 3 lines 31-39) and the methods (p. 5, lines 95-103). Additional sentence added - p. 7, lines 131-133.

The inclusion criteria for participants included ‘no epidural or narcotic’ (p. 6, line 115). When women contacted the research team, they were assessed against the inclusion criteria prior to participation (p. 5, line 111-113). Additional sentence added – p.6-7, lines 130-131.

The Australian states that the women were from are listed Table 1. Additional details to clarify this have been added to p. 6, lines 109-111 and 116-118.

Comment:
Also the order...you have the ethical approval after you talk about data analysis, surely it should be further up.

Response:
Agreed. Content regarding ethical approval has been moved to the beginning of the methodology section (p.5, lines 104-106).

Comment:
I am also uncertain about the inclusion of the theme of "encapsulation". I have no doubt about its derivation from your data but is it relevant? I don't think so....but you could persuade me otherwise.

Response:
“Encapsulation” is not a theme. This aspect is part of the theme “keeping”. Further clarification and justification of the inclusion of ‘encapsulation’ has been added: Table 3; p.26, lines 589, 597-598; p. 30, line 713.

Comment:
Finally I wonder if you have too much description in the findings leaving too little room for the discussion? My feeling was that the findings cold have done with a little more in-depth discussion.

Response:
Some quotes have been removed to streamline the description in the findings (p.13, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23). The discussion has not been significantly altered. The length and depth of the discussion is consistent with articles published in this journal. In addition, reviewer #2 did not identify the need to change the discussion.

REVIEWER #2

Comment:

The authors are correct that many studies don't focus on the perceptions or expectations of mothers birthing the placenta. This study serves to fill this gap while focusing on mothers experiences.

Response:

Thank you.

Comment:

Table 1 is described as demographics of the participant sample but none of the expected demographics were used…e.g. age, race, ethnicity etc. If these factors were unable to be used due to confidentiality reasons then the table shouldn't be referred to as "demographic".

Response:

Wording changed to ‘participant details’ (p. 6, line 121 and Table 1).

Comment:

Also it may be better to group the patients based on factors presented. For example structuring the table to allow the rows to show the distribution of the characteristics - Parity, type of management etc So for Type of management Active = 8 (40%) and Expectant = 11 (55%) and unsure= 1 (5%). This would allow you to then describe the characteristics by saying the majority of the women had Expectant management.

This table appears to be intended to be shown in the methods section (assumption based on [insert table 1] seen in Methods section. This table belongs in the results/findings section.

Response:
The use of Table 1 to describe the sample population is consistent with qualitative methodology. Percentages are not generally used in qualitative research – there is no statistical significance claimed in qualitative findings.

Comment:

The authors indicated that they intended to recruit 20 mothers and would recruit more if saturation was not met. The authors did not define saturation or indicate what led them to believe saturation was met with the initial 20 subjects.

Response:

Additional information re. saturation added (p. 7, lines 150-155).

Comment:

In the Findings section, the authors use the word "many", "some" etc. These words are subjective and given the fact that the authors have supporting information, I recommend that they use quantification as supporting evidence for the arguments made. For example, is "some" 2/20 cases or is it 9/20 cases?

Response:

Numbers have been added throughout the findings and discussion to substantiate subjective statements such as ‘some’, ‘most’ etc. (p. 9, line 182; p.10, lines 197, 206, 214; p.12, line 247; p.13, line 284; p.18, line 396; p.22, line 489 and 501; p. 23, line 592-531; p. 24, line 542; p. 26, lines 597-598; p. 27, line 618; p.28, line 651; p.29, lines 671-673; p. 30, lines 693, 701, 713).

Comment:

The findings section has a lot of information to sort through. It would have been helpful if the themes and takeaways were organized into tables. For example the main takeaways are discussed in the discussion section. But it would have been helpful to see the claims made in the discussion supported with table(s) in the findings/results section. For example, "...in this study most women reported that their care providers did not discuss the risks and benefits of active versus expectant management with them". A table showing the number of women who had and did not have risk/benefits explained would have been helpful. This would allow the reader/audience to be able to interpret the study for themselves and review the conclusions to determine if they agree/disagree with the author.
Response:

Some quotes have been removed to streamline the description in the findings (p.13, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23).

Table 3 has been amended to include an overview statement for each of the themes.

The presentation of findings as words rather than numbers is consistent with a qualitative methodology.