Author’s response to reviews

Title: Are preterm birth and intra-uterine growth restriction more common in Western Australian children of immigrant backgrounds? A population based data linkage study.

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Author’s response to reviews:

Editor Comments:

Thank you for your revised submission to BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth. I am sorry for the delay in informing you of our decision.

In addition to addressing the reviewers' comments below and attached, please address the following editorial points:

1. Please include more information on the y axis of the graphs (% of preterm births or % of post-term births) (Fig 1 and Fig 2) to make it easier to understand.

Response: Thank you. We have amended both figures.

2. Please, replace the heading ‘Acronyms’ with ‘List of Abbreviations’.

Reply: Thank you, we have corrected this.

3. Please be consistent with the term IUGR referring to either "restriction" or "retardation."
Response: Thank you, we have amended this and used restriction throughout the manuscript.

4. In the Ethics approval and consent to participate statement, please include how you obtained permission to access the patient data.

Response: Since routinely collected deidentified data were used for the analysis, no individual written or informed consent is considered necessary. Ethical approval was provided by the WA Department of Health Human Research Ethics Committee (2011/64) and the University of Western Australia Human Research Ethics committee (RA/4/1/8074).

5. In the Funding statement, please include the role of the funding body in the design of the study, data collection and analysis, and drafting of the manuscript.

Response: We have amended our finding statement, as the funding bodies had no role in the design of the study, data collection and analysis and the drafting of the manuscript.

BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth operates a policy of open peer review, which means that you will be able to see the names of the reviewers who provided the reports via the online peer review system. We encourage you to also view the reports there, via the action links on the left-hand side of the page, to see the names of the reviewers.

Reviewer reports:

Reviewer one:

Kelli Ryckman (Reviewer 1): This is a nicely written manuscript describing birth outcome differences based on immigrant status in Australia. My only major issue is with the interpretation of table 2. Statements are made that the risk is higher for foreign born women for preterm but the table indicates relative risks that are not significant as the confidence intervals cross one. I think the conclusions are stated too strongly for instances where the CI crosses 1. This is true for some of the other tables and conclusions drawn as well.

Response: All results are presented in the tables irrespective of whether the CIs cross unity. However we have amended the text component of the results to ensure that statements about increased or decreased risk are only made in relation to results which are significant or close to significance. We have also revised our discussion to ensure we have not overstated our findings.

My second concern is the focus of the discussion. The discussion is very long and some of the material like talking about ASD is a little out of scope and some of the points should be shortened in order to not overinterpret your findings.
Response: Thank you for this concern and as such have condensed our discussion to tighten our scope.

Reviewer 2:

Jeanine Young, Ph.D., BSc (Hons) Nursing (Reviewer 2): This is well written paper with clear aims, appropriate methodology and statistical analyses, providing valuable information to inform appropriate evidence-based antenatal screening and strategies to reduce risk for Australia's growing immigrant population of birthing women.

Reply: Thank you.

Please check order of names for first author, surname appears first which is not consistent with remaining co-authors.

Response: Thank you, we have corrected this.

Previous requests to address revisions in the manuscript have been completed and justified.

Reply: Thank you.

Reviewer 3: Please see attachment.

This is an important study the authors did a good job of indicating why this study is important for their population. It is important to study and identify areas of health disparities among the subpopulations in developed countries in order to provide evidence-based interventions.

Reply: Thank you.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:

In the results section, the authors did not perform statistical analyses to compare the demographic distributions between the populations being studied in table 1. Therefore there isn't evidence to support their interpretations from the data in table 1. For example there is no evidence presented to show that FB-UMIC mothers were more likely to be married. Response: Thank you. The results presented were based on the original descriptive analyses we undertook but which we did not include in Table 1. We have now added the Pearson chi2 square and p values to this table.
For tables 2.0, 2.1, the results that are non-significant for the FB-LIC and FB-LMIC are interpreted as "having an increased risk". This is also the case in their conclusion, in which they conclude that foreign born women had negative outcomes when this was not the case based on the confidence intervals showing no statistically significant difference from tables 2.0, 2.1 and 3.0.

Response: Thank you for the above comment, however please refer to our response to the first reviewer in-regards to presentation of results and interpretations.