Reviewer’s report

Title: Exploring women’s experiences and decision making about physical activity during pregnancy and following birth: A qualitative study

Version: 0 Date: 16 Sep 2019

Reviewer: Suzanne Lee

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper

Abstract
The Background section of the abstract makes reference to risk perception but this is not particularly discussed in the full Background. Suggest either amending the abstract to be more representative of the Background, or if risk perception is an important feature of the study, emphasising this more in the Background.

Background
Ref 8 states women are most likely to follow advice from doctors, nurses and dieticians. Suggest this paragraph needs clarifying as it then discusses midwives' ability to discuss PA guidelines, however midwives are not mentioned as a profession whose advice women follow. Presumably ref 8 is not from the UK - is there a more appropriate study which demonstrates women take advice from midwives? It would then make sense that what midwives advise about PA is important.

Methods
Please be consistent regarding terminology for weight/BMI - either 'healthy' or 'normal'. I would suggest 'healthy' as less subjective.
Please reconsider the phrase 'new mum' in an academic paper.

Results
Subtheme 'Taking ownership' - there is a contradiction between the title and the subject matter which seems to be more about perceived loss of ownership. Suggest amending the title of the subtheme or ensuring the content more accurately reflects the title.
Subtheme 'Expectations of physical activity' - please clarify this theme. It is not clear how expectations are 'influenced by several factors', to what end, or what the factors are.
Quote from Molly ('Most people...') seems to belong more in the first subtheme about taking ownership.

Discussion
The discussion makes reference to risk perception but this does not appear to be especially reflective of the themes identified in the results or fully considered within the discussion beyond a basic definition of risk perception. If risk perception is considered a key concept for the study, it would be good to explore the literature in this area more fully, particularly that relating to risk perception in relation to pregnancy, and demonstrate more clearly how it relates to the results.
Similarly, it might also help to refer to the literature on benevolent sexism (the idea that women, particularly pregnant women, are delicate and in need of protection) which is damaging to women but not usually born of ill-intention, as this idea comes across quite strongly in your results.
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.

Yes

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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