Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of developmental delays in early infancy: results from a regional population-based longitudinal study

Version: 2 Date: 12 July 2015

Reviewer: Rebecca Baum

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Major compulsory revisions

The authors state that the current study is important in order to determine the prevalence of developmental delay in Norway, in part for service planning. It would be more accurate to state that the study is examining the prevalence of suspected developmental delay, as a formal evaluation will be needed to determine if the screen positive children truly have a delay. Thus, this prevalence estimate could be helpful in determining the need for assessment services; treatment services would depend on the estimate of children who truly have a delay rather than the number of children who screen positive.

Minor essential revisions

The article contains several spelling and grammatical mistakes. As an example, the authors use the terms "suspect" and "suspected" developmental delay; the latter would seem to be the most appropriate choice. Other examples include the use of plurals (p. 4 line 102: “American Academy of Pediatrics recommends…” and p. 7 line 181 “..children who score 2 SD or more below average are considered…”).

If possible, it would be helpful for the authors to include additional information about the variation in gestational age and birth weight, as this could significantly affect the results. For example, results would likely be very different if the sample contained a relatively small number of extremely preterm/low birth weight infants as compared to a higher number.

On page 3, references should be considered for the sentence on lines 88-89.

On page 6, the authors state that “all parents with ASQ screen positive infants were offered further evaluation…”. It is not clear if that was the study protocol, or if quality checks/chart reviews were conducted to ensure that 100% of screen positive children were offered referrals. Lack of appropriate intervention for screen-positive children has been a concern in the United States.

Discretionary revisions

The authors state that the study population is “low risk.” However, preterm and low birth weight infants were included in the study population. Perhaps it would
be more accurate to describe the sample as a community-based sample, as these characteristics have previously been demonstrated to be risk factors for developmental delay.

It would be helpful to understand why non-Norwegian speaking parents were not excluded from the study. It appears that they self-selected out of the study by not participating.

The authors may wish to specify in the abstract and earlier in the manuscript that corrected gestational age was used to determine the time of administration for preterm infants, as this is an important methodological point.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.