Reviewer’s report

Title: Maternal socio-demographic and psychological predictors for risk of developmental delays among young children in Mongolia

Version: 0 Date: 19 May 2017

Reviewer: Judi Mesman

Reviewer's report:

Overall, this manuscript reports on an important issue in public health, in a context that is not often represented in the scientific literature. However, there are some significant limitations that hamper the manuscript's potential value and impact. I will discuss these below.

Most importantly, the sample size is too small for analyses on a problem that is not highly prevalent, with only 17 children in the sample at risk for developmental delay. Analyzing the characteristics of only 17 infants on so many variables can simply not yield enough robust and reliable information on risk factors for developmental delays.

Another issue is the conception of the variables and models. The Introduction broadly mentions biological and psychosocial factors and then seemingly randomly discusses a few, whereas many other potentially relevant variables are left out. It is unclear why these risk factors were chosen out of the multitude of potential variables. There is no clear theoretical model guiding these choices, so that the reader is left with a list of predictors that could also have looked very different, but without knowing why. It would be important to provide a clear theoretical framework to remedy this.

If I understand correctly, the authors tested two cross-sectional models: one with baseline predictors in relation to baseline risk for developmental delays and one with follow-up predictors of follow-up risk for developmental delays. I would have expected to see longitudinal analyses.

A few other issues:

- The manuscript needs to be edited in terms of wording and grammar.
- It is unclear how the sample drawn from the larger sample was selected
- P12: the covariates might be better framed as predictors, since they constitute substantive variables with complex relations to the outcome variable.
- There are a lot of predictors for a relatively small sample size. Could looking at composites be better? Maybe more robust as predictors?

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

**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 am able to assess the statistics

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

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