Reviewer's report

Title: Early Motherhood: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Experiences of African Australian Teenage Mothers in Greater Melbourne, Australia

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Reviewer: Sally Brown

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Yes; it is a clear and well defined study.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   Yes; qualitative methodology is appropriate, and the descriptions of data gathering and analysis are clear, with justification provided for the methods chosen.

3. Are the data sound?
   Yes; quotations are used appropriately.

4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation?
   N/A

5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes.

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   The discussion is interesting but I feel that it could go further in exploring some of the issues the authors raise. As this was a study with migrant women, the question of migration and integration could be explored in more depth, perhaps. It is mentioned here, partly in relation to absent fathers, but I would be interested to hear much more from the women themselves about how they feel as migrants, and how their status impacts (or not) on their role as mothers. Also, one of the points made early in the paper was that motherhood is a very valued role in African communities, and to become a mother is both normal and desirable, but later on we hear that the women feel shame and are stigmatised and looked down on by the communities - is this solely because they are unmarried? Are the young fathers similarly frowned upon? Is there pressure within the community to marry? I wonder whether the authors could explore this particular issue in more depth, particularly the contradiction between motherhood being valued but these mothers being shamed.
7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Yes.

8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Yes; there is scope for additional literature to be included, particularly other qualitative work which challenges the predominantly negative perspective on teenage motherhood.

9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Yes; the title is good and the abstract is clear.

10. Is the writing acceptable?
There are a few typos which should be picked up by a thorough proof reading, but apart from that, the writing is clear.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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'