Reviewer's report

Title: Using Theory-Based Messages to Motivate U.S. Pregnant Women to Prevent Cytomegalovirus Infection: Results from Formative Research

Version: 0 Date: 24 Nov 2016

Reviewer: Cheryl Jones

Reviewer's report:

The authors undertook qualitative research using fear appeals theory-based messages about CMV and prevention with U.S. women. The investigators evaluated views in two groups—women with CMV infected children who were enrolled in a longitudinal study about CMV, and pregnant and non-pregnant women with young children in two US cites. Key findings were that women welcomed combined messages that CMV is common, can reduce in severe harm to their babies, and that there are prevention strategies, and communication strategies surrounding these messages. It also provided insight into a perceived lack of feasibility of some behavioural strategies to limit pregnant women's exposure to CMV.

Congenital CMV is an important cause of childhood disability. There is limited understanding in the communication about this infection. This study is an important piece of research that will provide a much needed evidence base for antenatal education strategies to reduce harms from congenital CMV. The methodology is sound. The manuscript is well written although could be more concise.

Minor comments:
page 3, lines 4- In the abstract - provide some explanation for informed non content readers about the premised underlying fear appeals theory-based messages.
Some of the methodology tables could be provided as supplemental material
Some specific discussion about how the findings would inform change of the current CDC cCMV prevention strategy would be helpful.

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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