Reviewer's report

Title: Traumatic events: Exploring associations with maternal depression, infant bonding, and oxytocin in Latina mothers

Version: 2 Date: 31 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Phyllis Zelkowitz

Reviewer's report:

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This manuscripts explores the associations between maternal traumatic experiences, self-reported depression and bonding in a very small sample of Latina mothers. The mediating role of plasma oxytocin is also explored. The literature review is not specific as to the construct of bonding, and how it might be distinct from attachment. The associations between oxytocin and depression, and even oxytocin and trauma, have not been definitively established, with some studies finding positive correlations between oxytocin and these variables, and others showing the opposite direction of effects. The rationale for studying a sample of Latina mothers could be further elaborated - are these a particularly high risk groups of women? Are there other characteristics that make them a particular target for this type of study? What is the rationale for the 4 week and 8 week timepoints?

The sample description does not explain why only 35 of 64 women who were screened enrolled for this study. The sample was likely too small to consider controlling for some important variables, including parity and education; however, these factors might have affected the results. Moreover, oxytocin was assayed when women were either breastfeeding or bottlefeeding. Breastfeeding is associated with oxytocin letdown - how might this have affected the results? More information on the validity of the PBQ would be of interest. The calculation of the various trauma scores was not clearly explained.

The interpretation of marginally significant findings is not warranted. How can differences in results at 4 weeks and 8 weeks be explained?

The discussion should emphasize that the findings reported here are exploratory and preliminary. The shared method variance of the self-reported measures of trauma, depression, and bonding should be noted as a limitation.
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?
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No

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I am able to assess the statistics

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