Reviewer’s report

Title: Influences on participant reporting in the World Health Organisation drugs exposure pregnancy registry; a qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 4 July 2014

Reviewer: Joanne Ryan

Reviewer’s report:

This paper describes a qualitative study of women’s reporting of drug and alcohol exposure during pregnancy, which was part of a pilot registry study on the effects of maternal drug use on pregnancy outcomes. Given the essential need for the registry to include accurate information related to pregnancy exposure, the main aim of the study was to determine factors that affected women’s reporting of these exposures. Better understanding of such factors could thus lead to improvements in the way exposure information was obtained, thus leading to overall improvements in the accuracy of such data.

Overall the manuscript is well written and referenced, the questions posed by the authors have been clearly defined and the methods are appropriate and well described. Comments to further enhance the quality of the manuscript are as follows:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Although this is clearly a qualitative study and the authors describe it as such, this should not exclude the incorporation of some quantitative data which would help enhance the importance of these findings. For example, in the abstract it states that “Women in this study commonly take traditional medicines in pregnancy and to a lesser extent over-the-counter medicines and alcohol”. It would be clearer to say around xx% of women reported taking traditional medications, while a lesser extent (yy%) reported...... Another example is the 2nd paragraph of the results where we are told that the 2 “larger” categories within this theme (factors directly shaping reporting of exposures at the ANC).... By larger categories, one assumes they mean these points were mentioned more frequently by women. Can this then be quantified to give the reader a better sense of how important each point was?

2. Table 1 should provide more detail, such as the exact number of women within each strata, age ranges, and other information which has been collected and is relevant ie. whether this is a first pregnancy

3. In the flow diagram given in Figure 1 it states the “exclusion of non-eligible women”. Please provide details of this in the manuscript ie. based on what criteria were women excluded?

Minor Essential Revisions
4. Paragraph 3 of the methods: it states that 2-3 FGDs were to be conducted per strata, but Table 1 suggests there were a few with only 1 and one strata had 4. Could the authors please make mention of this and provide an explanation?

5. Results paragraph 1: please link the themes and categories directly with Figure 1, ie. Refer to them as Themes in the text and don’t call themes categories (ie. in the section titled “Social context of pregnancy healthcare-related behaviour” these are categories not themes).

6. Figure 1: please change the direction of the Figure for ease of reading, so that one works down the diagram, with the flow of arrows downwards, rather than starting at the bottom and reading upwards.

Minor issues not for publication
7. Boxes should be labelled at the top, rather than the bottom
8. Please define ANC the first time it is used in the abstract

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