Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Is practice of routine episiotomy changing? A cross-sectional study comparing two types of hospitals from 2007 to 2012 in Catalonia

**Version:** 1  
**Date:** 21 October 2014

**Reviewer:** Helena Lindgren

**Reviewer’s report:**

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

This manuscript contains useful information regarding the use of episiotomy in private and public hospitals in Catalonia. However, I think the manuscript needs to be improved regarding the following:

**Abstract:** Background could be shortened and focus on the problem and the aim of this study. Methods should be described using the following order: design and setting (inclusion and exclusion criteria), data collection and analysis. Results could be shortened and should contain statistical measures for the differences detected (OR and CI). The terms "prevent" or "protect" should be used with caution since this study can only describe associations, there is not evidence to say that a private hospital is protective against perianal trauma but there is an association between private hospitals and a lower rate of perineal trauma. I also think that the rate of severe perineal trauma should be described in the results section and not in the conclusion.

**Manuscript:** In this study public data was used and this may be the explanation for the poor information about the women giving birth in the different birth settings. I think it is essential in this kind of study to present data for primiparas and parous women separately since it is well known that first time mothers have a higher risk of perineal trauma. It is also essential to know the numbers of primiparas giving birth in the different birth settings for the same reason, this may be a confounder to adjust for. Another risk factor for severe perineal trauma is instrumental birth which is not considered in this manuscript. This needs to be explained and adjusted for if the prevalence of instrumental deliveries differ between the settings.

**Results:** This section is called results and discussion which is confusing. There is no discussion in this section as I see it. The main concern regarding the results section is related to the lack of information about potential bias and without this information I think the results are compromised.

**Conclusion:** This section seem to be the discussion section. The limitations of the study are recognized but not discussed with regard to the impact they might have on the results. In what way do women who give birth in public or private hospitals differ? How is that related to the knowledge about severe perineal trauma? Is it possible that also midwives and obstetricians working in private or public hospitals differ? Could that affect the activity?
My most important concern has to do with the lack of information regarding the participants, without information about parity and mode of birth this study contributes with very limited knowledge.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'