Reviewer's report

Title: The safety of Canadian rural maternity services: A multi-jurisdictional cohort analysis

Version: 2 Date: 8 March 2015

Reviewer: FRANCESCA CALO

Reviewer's report:

Discretionary Revisions
1. In the overview of the literature could be interesting to refer to Hoang et al. (2014). Women's maternity care needs and related service models in rural areas: A comprehensive systematic review of qualitative evidence. Women and Birth, 7, 4: 233-241; and also (maybe) to the paper reported in the systematic review;

2. Conclusion: is it possible to rule out other causes (i.e. socio and economic background) in the relation between lack of rural services and neonatal outcomes? The authors underline the future research on this topic. Maybe at this point, it is not possible to affirm the causal relation. Then, it could be useful to change the sentence 230-232 and 261-267. (See also point 3 – minor essential revision).

3. Why some of the service level data are missing in Nova Scotia? Maybe it could be useful to add an explanation behind the lack of data or the lack of maternity service levels

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Explain better the research gap the contribution aims to address: it would be important to describe better the importance and relevance of the database (122-124)

2. No congruence between the number of birth presented in the abstract and the number presented in the paper.

3. It is important to better balance discussion and conclusion: maybe analysing data in the discussion and provide limitation and future research possibility in the conclusion (see above point 2).

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interest