Reviewer’s report

Title: What makes pregnant workers sick: why, when, where and how? An exploratory study in the ready-made garment industry in Bangladesh

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Reviewer: Sheena Currie

Reviewer’s report:

Reviewer feedback re REPH-D-17-00185

What makes female pregnant workers sick: why, when, where and how? An exploratory study in the ready-made garment industry in Bangladesh

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Generally this is a well constructed paper - it reads well (note some minor typos). The social cultural issues around the garment industry, employees’ rights in pregnancy, employment practices and occupational health are of interest. Methods are appropriate.

The main issue is the link made between stress and PIH. It's unlikely to be supported by evidence and this is a big assumption for the working hypothesis. Was the hypertension validated or the women's perception? It's noted that Doctors diagnosed hypertension. The 2 references used to support link between stress and PIH are dated (1992 and 1999 respectively). Little is known on the pathophysiology of PIH and its more serious manifestation of pre-eclampsia however it is not caused by diet, stress etc. Other dimensions of stress around mental health issues would be equally applicable as are postural complaints.

Did the women have antenatal care - it's not mentioned. If pregnant women have PIH the 'doctors' should also check other aspects maternal & fetal wellbeing.

Some of the narrative around 'hypertension' is technically incorrect e.g. Morium is a 28 year-old 223 woman who developed hypertension during the first trimester of her pregnancy.

Note - PIH only occurs after 20 weeks gestation

'She always feels tried, (tired) short of breath' - sounds more like anemia which they possibly all have.

TITLE What makes female pregnant workers sick: why, when, where and how? An exploratory study in the ready-made garment industry in Bangladesh

1. Female could be removed from title unless a search term
2. Suggest revisit title as narrative does not address all questions

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