Reviewer’s report

Title: A Gestational Vulnerability Window for Smoking Exposure and the Increased Risk of Preterm Birth: How Timing and Intensity of Maternal Smoking Matter

Version: 0 Date: 14 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Suneth Agampodi

Reviewer's report:

General

The study's main strength is that it is based on a population-based data register, including a large sample. However, the major flow in the study is that the quality of exposure variable is questionable. Whatever the analysis done, still the quality of exposure and probable misclassification bias across the study sample is difficult to overcome. This could have been studied if exposure status were analyzed across other variables included. At the same time, rather than using a simple logistic regression model, looking at effect modifications and interactions should have been done with the available variables.

Introduction

Preterm birth estimate were given was 2014. Do you have newer estimates?

Methods

MBC Pregnancy and Child Birth is an international journal and the readership doesn't have an idea of the data source. It needs an explanation including the data, data quality, completeness, etc. Though the references were given, the methods section is incomplete without those data. Previously reported level of underreporting and data quality needs to be discussed in methods.

"Apart from that, the estimates of smoking appear to have improved with the revised birth certificate" do you have a reference for this statement?

Results

Observing that all three trimester smoking was associated with lower OR was attributed to exposure measurement error. How can the same error could not have been occurred in other estimates?
Why no smoking was not considered as the reference category?

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal