Author’s response to reviews

Title: The ability of late pregnancy maternal tests to predict adverse pregnancy outcomes associated with placental dysfunction (specifically fetal growth restriction and pre-eclampsia). A protocol for a systematic review and meta-analysis of prognostic accuracy studies.

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Reviewer comment:
QUADAS was developed to assess diagnostic accuracy studies. Therefore I think you must modify (as you stated already in the previous version) QUADAS when applied for prediction because in this case you consider a longitudinal relation and not a cross-sectional relation. Consequently some items in the original tool, in particular the items on timing are not really applicable. The modifications should be specified in advance.

We thank the reviewer for their comments regarding modifying QUADAS-2 for this study. Following the reviewers comments we have sought advice from Dr Penny Whiting, original author of the QUADAS-2 tool who has suggested the proposed QUADAS-2 tool is valid in such a study especially as in studies concerned with pregnancy outcome there is often little distinction between diagnosis and prognosis. She specifically suggested retaining the item on timing as a minimum length of follow up maybe very important especially in ensuring that any participant did not have the index condition at the time of testing i.e. testing predated the condition. In our inclusion criteria we state that "studies must: assess biochemical placental function tests and/or ultrasound parameters after 24 completed weeks’ gestation but before the occurrence of outcomes.” Information on timing of testing and diagnosis of conditions is therefore crucial to fulfil this criteria. Following the reviewers and Dr Whitings advice we have modified the tool which is attached in supplementary file 3.