Reviewer’s report

Title: Maternal and birth cohort studies in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 0 Date: 17 Jun 2019

Reviewer: Carmen Figueroa

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors

After carefully revising your manuscript"Maternal and birth cohort studies in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis". I have a few concerns:

I don't think the conclusions drawn are sufficient to make a meaningful conclusion about all maternal and birth cohorts in Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

I can see that the authors used only four databases (EMBASE, PubMed, Cochrana and Web of Science); these could not have been sufficient enough to yield all publications on maternal and birth cohorts. The authors may consider increasing the number of databases searched. Some of the other databases include: Scopus, Google Scholar, PsycINFO, Sociological Abstracts, etc. And regional databases in Arabic. Also the last search was done in November 2017, I believe this search is out of date.

2. Almost 75% of the studies selected for inclusion in the systematic review (n=25, 71%) were conducted in two countries; i.e. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. I believe this is not sufficient to warrant a systematic review on the birth and maternal outcomes in the selected region.

3. I have concerns over the way the results of the systematic review are reported. The results appear more as a summary of the individual studies than results from a systematic review. I believe that a systematic review should go beyond merely summarizing the findings from individual studies selected.

Specific comments

1. The annexes are unnecessarily long. I don't think all the details provided in the annexes are needed. The authors may find it helpful to summarize the data presented in the annexes into half of the current pages or even less.

Level of interest

Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of limited interest

Quality of written English

Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published
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