Reviewer's report

Title: Knowledge about iodine requirements during pregnancy and breastfeeding among pregnant women living in Northern Ireland

Version: 0 Date: 02 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Jorja Collins

Reviewer's report:

Abstract

Page 2 line 31. Write out UK in full.

Page 2. Line 32-34. The aim is a little clunky. Suggest reword to "the aim was to determine the level of knowledge about iodine nutrition during pregnancy among pregnant women living in Northern Ireland."

Page 2. Line 35-38. Please provide a short statement of statistical analyses undertaken.

Page 2. Line 36-38. The response rate is a result, please move this to the results section.

Introduction.

Page 3. Lines 52-61. The timeline of events being described is unclear and conflicting. The authors describe that iodine intakes were thought to be adequate for many years, however then go on to describe that levels are inadequate in the 90s which is 30 year ago! Please clarify.

Page 3 line 60-61. Provide a reference for this statistic.

Page 3. Line 64-65. Amend to 'dietary intake from naturally occurring sources'.

Page 4. Line 86-87. Aim, refer to comment re: abstract. The results include comparison of knowledge among women at different stages and number of pregnancies. It is unclear why this has been done as it is not part of the aim. Please adjust.

Methods.

Please amend headings. Main heading - method. Sub headings - subjects, data collection, statistical analyses.
More information is required for the methods. Suggest you refer to the STROBE checklist to help you write the methods. 


Please described the questionnaire in more detail. Eg. how many questions it included, what the response options were (e.g. likert scale, MCQ, open ended etc.).

You have collect data on parity and trimester, please report how this was collected.

Please describe the subjects in more detail; were there inclusion and exclusion criteria? Why did you choose 200 as the sample size?

Please describe the type of analyses you completed; you have completed descriptive statistics as well as statistically compared responses among women of different stages and number of pregnancies.

Results

The lack of demographic data about the population (e.g. age, education level) means it is not possible to understand who these women are, and therefore whether the findings are representative or translatable. If it is possible to obtain this data from medical records, it would be useful to add.

The results section and results tables needs significant work. In many cases, comparisons are made between groups with no data provided (only the p value). Providing the data would strengthen the results. The tables are not well formatted. It is standard practice to report n and % in tables, please amend. There is variability in the layout within table 2 - please make consistent. It would be clearer to add up the % for strongly agree/agree etc and just report 1 value.

Discussion

Table 5 would be better off removed, with findings incorporated into the text. Lines 78-85 page 4 would be better off moved to the discussion so there is no repetition.

Please add in recommendations for future research and public health/clinical practice to the discussion. This has been mentioned in the conclusion, but would be better off in the discussion and needs to be expanded.

There is inconsistency in the use of 'NI' and N Ireland throughout.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

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