

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Access and quality of maternity care for disabled women during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period in England: data from a national survey
AUTHORS	Malouf, Reem; Henderson, Jane; Redshaw, Maggie

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

REVIEWER	Caroline Bradbury-Jones University of Birmingham England
REVIEW RETURNED	18-Mar-2017

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>Thank you for asking me to review this article. It is clear and coherent and importantly it makes a contribution to knowledge. I have three points to make:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I have reviewed the statistical analysis and results and they appear sound. However, quantitative research is not my area of expertise and I would be reassured if an expert statistician checked for appropriateness and rigour of this part of the study.2. The article is very UK-centric. The survey was conducted in England and so extrapolating results beyond this context is of course difficult. However, it would be nice to see attempts at making the paper more internationally relevant. Perhaps by explicitly referring to the context of other countries? This is touched upon on page 13, but not developed. Without this more global element, I feel the paper will be limited and not reach its potential.3. The thing that I do not like about the manuscript in its current form is terminology around disability. Persistent use of 'women with a disability' implies that the disability is hers. She may have an impairment but the disability is a social construction. A far more helpful viewpoint may be to adopt a social perspective of disability. This approach views disability as the restriction of activities created by society that prevent a person with an impairment from experiencing full social inclusion; causing an unequal social relationship between people with and without impairments (see for example the work of Carol Thomas). I think it important to review the language used. Also, I feel it would add theoretical strength to the paper to include some discussion and debate about the different lenses through which disability can be viewed. It would be helpful to see this near the beginning of the paper and then revisited again in the discussion. As it stands, I feel the issue of disability is dealt with uncritically. <p>Overall I think this is a good draft manuscript, but addressing points 2 and 3 will bring it to another level theoretically, critically and internationally.</p>
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REVIEWER	Monika Mitra Brandeis University, USA
REVIEW RETURNED	01-Apr-2017

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>The authors have presented an examination of the disparities in access and quality of care received by women with disabilities who used maternity services in England. The study is innovative, and makes a significant contribution to the emerging literature on pregnancy and childbirth among women with disabilities. Below are a few comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The authors should provide additional details about the study design and methodology. Was the survey representative/population-based and therefore generalizable? How was the sample derived? 2. What were the disability questions? Were they based on any validated disability measures such as the Washington Group set of questions on disability? Have they been used in other surveys? 3. Maternal characteristics – I'm curious why questions related to level of education, marital status, household income (or any other measure of income), urban/rural residential location were not included in the examination of maternal characteristics and adjusted analyses. 4. There are a number of studies on pregnancy among women with different disabilities from the US that the authors have missed citing in their literature review. These include publications by Dr. Mitra, Dr. Iezzoni, Dr. Horner-Johnson, among others. 5. Table 2 – were all the analyses adjusted? From reading table 2, it seems that some of the analyses were adjusted and some were not (OR and aOR). Please clarify. 6. The authors should consider strengthening the discussion section by including policy recommendations specific to women with disabilities (in particular to their findings related to the different disabilities) 7. The authors should consider rephrasing the sentence on page 14, line 40 (Disabled women were more “critical” about their maternity care). This puts the burden on the woman as opposed to the quality of the care.
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer 1

1. I have reviewed the statistical analysis and results and they appear sound. However, quantitative research is not my area of expertise and I would be reassured if an expert statistician checked for appropriateness and rigour of this part of the study.

N/A

2. The article is very UK-centric. The survey was conducted in England and so extrapolating results beyond this context is of course difficult. However, it would be nice to see attempts at making the paper more internationally relevant. Perhaps by explicitly referring to the context of other countries? This is touched upon on page 13, but not developed. Without this more global element, I feel the paper will be limited and not reach its potential.

Reference to more non-UK research has been added to make the study more internationally relevant

(p14, lines 5-12).

Reviewer 2

1. The authors should provide additional details about the study design and methodology. Was the survey representative/population-based and therefore generalizable? How was the sample derived?

Additional material describing the survey has been included in the Methods (p5-6 lines 19-22 and 6-14). The significant differences between respondents and non-respondents was mentioned in the Results. Implications for generalisability have been added (p7 lines 14-15).

2. What were the disability questions? Were they based on any validated disability measures such as the Washington Group set of questions on disability? Have they been used in other surveys?

The wording of the question has been added (p6 lines 15-16). This question was used in the previous CQC survey, but was not based on any validated measure.

3. Maternal characteristics – I'm curious why questions related to level of education, marital status, household income (or any other measure of income), urban/rural residential location were not included in the examination of maternal characteristics and adjusted analyses.

We were limited to the data collected by CQC which, unfortunately, did not include these items. This point has been added as a study limitation (p15 lines 1-2).

4. There are a number of studies on pregnancy among women with different disabilities from the US that the authors have missed citing in their literature review. These include publications by Dr. Mitra, Dr. Iezzoni, Dr. Horner-Johnson, among others.

Thank you. Reference has now been made to studies by Mitra and Iezzoni. However, we were unable to find any relevant published research by Dr. Horner-Johnson.

5. Table 2 – were all the analyses adjusted? From reading table 2, it seems that some of the analyses were adjusted and some were not (OR and aOR). Please clarify.

They were all adjusted. This has been corrected. Thank you.

6. The authors should consider strengthening the discussion section by including policy recommendations specific to women with disabilities (in particular to their findings related to the different disabilities)

The Conclusions and implications for research and practice have been strengthened (p15 lines 8-10; page 16, lines 8-10). Recommendations relating to specific disabled groups are already included (p15, lines 9-15).

7. The authors should consider rephrasing the sentence on page 14, line 40 (Disabled women were more "critical" about their maternity care). This puts the burden on the woman as opposed to the quality of the care.

This has been amended (p15, line 8-9).

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Caroline Bradbury-Jones University of Birmingham, UK
REVIEW RETURNED	27-Apr-2017

GENERAL COMMENTS	The manuscript is much improved as a result of the minor amendments that have been made and I have recommended acceptance.
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