

Author's response to reviews

Title: Antenatal Screening and the Gendering of Genetic Responsibility

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over

To the editor,

As requested, I have addressed all the reviewers' comments in the revised version of my protocol. Please see below my point by point response to reviewers comments.

Response to Heather Rowes comments:

Paragraph 1

- The Pilnick reference has been deleted and two new references have been added in paragraph 1 to support information given on haemoglobinopathy screening and the triple test. These references are taken directly from NHS Policies on screening in the UK.
- A sentence has been added which outlines what tests that the protocol/and study will focus on.
- The sentence which appeared unclear has been clarified and wording changed from 'result' to 'detect' abnormality as requested. In order to make the text flow better, this sentence has been moved to the start of paragraph 2.

Paragraph 2

- The reviewers' comments on existing research in the area have been duly noted and the paragraph has been amended as requested.
- New literature has also been added to support the arguments made here.
- The aims of the research have been made clear. The aim of the research is to explore whether the process of antenatal screening is gendered- not presume that it is (see comments below).

Paragraph 3

- This paragraph has been amended as requested. The objectives of the research have been made clearer and also terms have been clarified. New references have been added where appropriate.

Method

The methods section has been expanded in line with the reviewer's comments.

- Sample size has been added to the main text as has a justification for that size along with supporting references.
- A detailed section on recruitment has been added.
- A paragraph on recruiting male partners has been added.
- A paragraph on the potential of sampling bias has been added along with strategies to combat this.
- Information on privacy during research interviews has been added.
- Full details of ethical approval have been included.
- The section on data analysis has been expanded and clarified. More supporting references have been added here.

Discussion

- A statement has been included on the limitations of the study.
- A statement on theory generation has also been added.

- The reviewers' comments about men's involvement in screening, and their implications for an already highly pressured health service are not really appropriate for this particular study. As the reviewer points out, this is a small scale 'explorative' study funded by the Wellcome Trust which aims to contribute to debates and practice on antenatal screening. It's not a government funded project which aims directly to streamline or impose a new set of procedures on existing services.

Response to Mario Meraldi:

- More detail has been added to the methods section of the paper as requested. The author has added more information about semi-structured interviews, how they are used etc. Issues of validity have also been tackled in the methods section. The relationship between data collection and research questions has also been made more transparent. Supportive references have been added on these issues.
- Justification of sample size has been dealt with. A section on recruitment has been added in order to elaborate on issues raised by the reviewer here.
- The issue of self-selection and bias has been addressed in the methods section and appropriate references have been added.