

Author's response to reviews

Title: Assessing the health and development of ART-conceived young adults: A study of feasibility, parent recall, and acceptability

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Author's response to reviews: see over

6/10/08

Dr Regina Kulier and Dr José Guilherme Cecatti
Editors-in-Chief

Dear Drs Kulier and Cecatti

Re: MS 4803441472020308 Assessing the health and development of ART-conceived young adults: A feasibility study

Thank you very much for the careful review of this manuscript and the valuable suggestions to strengthen it. We are pleased to submit the revised manuscript for your consideration and have made the following amendments to it:

1. Reviewer 1 (Helmerhorst)
 - i. Rationale for a qualitative study

The health and development of ART conceived young adults has not to date been investigated anywhere in the world. In order to undertake such an investigation of young people, they can only be identified and accessed through their mothers who were treated at least eighteen years ago. It was not known whether this would be feasible or acceptable. The exploratory study reported in this paper investigated these and a qualitative approach is the most appropriate to investigating complex aspects of human experience about which nothing is already known. It was the first step in a planned future systematic survey of a large cohort of ART conceived young adults and was undertaken to inform this larger quantitative study.

An explanation of the rationale for this qualitative study, in particular that it is essential to establish feasibility and acceptability before initiating a population-based survey is on page 7 and has now been made more distinct in a separate paragraph.

- ii. Quantitative results section

This study did not collect quantitative data and therefore we are unable to provide more than a description of the characteristics of the participants. The proposed sub-section headings have been incorporated to make the Results clearer, specifically:

- a) Feasibility of contacting mothers of ART conceived young adults
 - b) Maternal recall of conception, pregnancy and birth, and early parenthood
 - c) Maternal recall of health and development of ART conceived young adult
 - d) Parental disclosure of mode of conception
 - e) Acceptability of a survey of the health and development of ART conceived young adults

iii. These sub-sections have also been made in the Discussion and the implications of the findings for researchers identified.

2. Reviewer 2 (Makuch)

i. Method of contacting family members other than the mother

We apologise that these details were not in the procedure and have added a sentence explaining how partners and young adults were contacted and how they participated in the interviews.

ii. Recall of health and development of ART conceived young adults

We agree that this was indistinct and believe that the addition of the sub-headings in both the Results and Discussion sections makes the rationale for enquiring into this and the nature of the recollections clearer.

3. Response to both reviewers

The reviewers had opposing views about the inclusion of the illustrative quotations. In qualitative research these constitute the data and therefore need to be incorporated in the Results. We think that R1's suggested sub-titles make the argument more distinct, but concur with R2 that the results are 'well presented and the quotations illustrative' and prefer not to remove them to an appendix.

In order to reflect these clarifications we propose to change the title to:

Assessing the health and development of ART conceived young adults: a study of feasibility, parent recall and acceptability.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Fisher