

Reviewer's report

Title: Support to woman by a companion of her choice during childbirth: a randomized controlled trial

Version: 1 **Date:** 22 May 2007

Reviewer: Justus Hofmeyr

Reviewer's report:

General

This a useful study because the value of chosen companions has not to my knowledge been assessed in a randomized trial previously, and the results have implications for large numbers of women worldwide.

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

The question is new in that support by a chosen companion during labour has not to my knowledge been assessed in a randomized trial previously. The question is well defined

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

Yes

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?

It is unusual in a clinical trial to have 100% complete data for all outcomes. If there were missing data for any outcomes, it would be preferable for the appropriate denominator to be given for each outcome. The continuous data are described in the tables as median values, but presumably the ranges are given as well. This should be added in the tables ('median values (range)')

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Yes

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Yes

7. Is the writing acceptable?

Yes, though there are a few grammatical errors.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

None

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

See (3) above: Check that the denominators in the tables are correct (if there are any missing data), and labelling of the continuous variables.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

None

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.