

Reviewer's report

Title: Reducing postpartum weight retention - a controlled trial in primary health care

Version: 1 **Date:** 30 April 2007

Reviewer: Rena R Wing

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript reports findings of a pilot study evaluating the effects of a postpartum weight control intervention in a primary health care setting. The study's strengths include its high retention rate and innovative idea to provide the mother's counseling sessions at the time of her child's health clinic visits. The main limitation of the study is that it was not a randomized controlled trial and the two groups differed on variables known to influence postpartum weight control, including gestational weight gain and pre-pregnancy BMI. The sample size is also small. These significant limitations are addressed in the Discussion. However, there are other issues to consider.

1)The study's title is misleading. This is not a randomized trial, so I would omit the word "controlled" and recommend using the word "pilot."

2)The authors should provide the empirical rationale for the four dietary objectives that were selected. Reasons why recommendations for energy intake and expenditure were not discussed (particularly in those retaining high amounts of weight) should also be addressed.

3)Explanation should be provided as to why mean weight retention didn't differ between groups, yet the adjusted odds ratio for returning to preconception weight (or below) was so high.

4)There were significantly more smokers in the control than in the intervention group, which could also explain differences in weight loss. I would suggest controlling for postpartum smoking status.

5)Please specify how the larger study will correct the limitations of this pilot study.

6)Please provide p values for Table 1

7)Were means values reported in Table 2 and on page 12 adjusted or unadjusted?

8)Did having the infants at the sessions detract from the mother-PHN interaction? Was babysitting provided?

9)How many attended the supervised group exercise sessions?

10)Paper needs to be carefully read and edited for grammar.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.