Reviewer's report

Title: Knowledge, attitude and experience of episiotomy use among obstetricians and midwives in Viet Nam

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Reviewer: Michael C Klein

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential revisions: The authors have conducted an excellent study that can be enhanced as below:

This study is well conducted. It set out to measure the attitudes of obstetricians vs midwives in their use of routine episiotomy and the attitudes and barriers to implementing change, given that the Cochrane and other sources clearly state that routine episiotomy use is not defensible and should be replaced by selective use.

The authors clearly show that the belief of both provider groups that routine episiotomy use prevents 3rd/4th degree tears is one of the main reasons for the continued use of the procedure. This has been convincingly shown to be false in a RCT. In this study 52 of 53 women with such severe tears had them in the presence of episiotomy, as close to causality that one is going to get. I think these studies should be referenced. (1, 2)

Regarding the issues of behavioral change, at least one study that clearly showed the relationship between attitudes toward episiotomy use and attitudes toward a range of other procedures. (3, 4)

The authors literature review debunks the idea that the short perineum is an actual entity. There is no such thing as an Asian short perineum. What one is up against in changing behavior is short attention or willingness to wait for the perineum to stretch.

In my opinion, this is an excellent contribution that will be strengthened by reference to the literature below and a clear recommendation for workshops that address false attitudes and the reasons behind these attitudes. As the authors point out there is little difference between obstetricians and midwives regarding routine episiotomy. Both are operating with false beliefs that need to be addressed. The good news is that in Western countries, the younger group of obstetricians have managed to change their attitudes on this and related issues. (5) Hence training is at the heart of the issue.


**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests