

Letter to the Editors on the article by Melo & Araújo

Carta às Editoras sobre o artigo de
Melo & Araújo

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Dear Editors,

We read with great interest the study by Melo & Araújo¹. The authors aimed to analyze whether the COVID-19 infection in pregnant women is related to premature birth and birth weight, and to investigate the possibility of vertical transmission. The authors should be acclaimed for establishing a timely and informative systematic review of COVID-19 in this critical condition, however, we would like to draw their attention to a certain aspect.

The authors should extract the hospital's name and the periods of recruitment because some pregnant women may have been included in multiple publications, as admission dates overlap with reports from the same hospital. The cases in reference 30 (Yang et al.²) should be considered duplicates because the case series from reference 9 (Chen et al.³) was reported by the same hospital with the overlapping periods of recruitment. At least one pregnant woman or one neonate had identical characteristics (e.g., maternal age, gestational age at delivery, mode of delivery, gender, Apgar score, birth weight).

The inclusion of duplicates may introduce bias into a systematic review and affect the comprehension of the disease and its epidemiology. Thus, we suggest that the authors review the hospital information and the periods of recruitment. If the periods of recruitment overlap and a hospital had published their cases more than once, only the study with the biggest data should be included to minimize the possibility of double counting⁴.

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Contributions

J. Cai conceived the design of the comments and made critical revision. M. Tang and H. Liang drafted the manuscript. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

Additional informations

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Conflict of interests

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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