

MS 2005-108 Comments to Authors -- Reviewer #1 (written by Margaret Kearney)

This paper describes part of the process of producing an evidence-based informational booklet on cesarean and vaginal birth risks. The writing is clear and the project worthy. The paper would be strengthened by a clearer focus on the small part of the process described here, which is the dissemination phase of the project (although not its end results), and by some reorganization and clarification of definitions. This effort will also help the paper come closer to the page limit given for the ENRS reports. These points are detailed below.

The title of the paper implies that a research project was conducted, but the work done would not generally be described as research but rather production of a systematic review and synthesis for a consumer audience, of which only the dissemination process (not the review or its results) is to be described here. A more focused title would clarify this point and help the reader understand why the traditional elements of a research report are not present. Then the background literature can be a more detailed summary of evidence regarding approaches to dissemination, followed by a description of those elements in the present work.

In the paper itself, like the title, the introductory section on translating research into practice uses a non-standard definition of translational research that does not apparently involve research per se. The actual nature of the project conducted or what is being described here does not become clear until well into the paper. A better problem statement to open the paper would be the issue of escalating cesarean birth rates without clear attention to the risk involved. All the content on cesarean risks could be condensed into a paragraph or two at the opening of the paper, followed by an equally concise statement about the nature of the project conducted in response to it, and the part of the project to be portrayed here.

If the information on cesarean birth were confined to the opening, then the Background section could cover concisely what is known about the best ways to package and disseminate evidence for practice change, preferably including more detail on the methods and results of studies supporting the methods selected for use here. This should include the information on decision aids that appears later in the paper.

Following the background on what is known about best approaches to dissemination for practice change and decision support, the project overview and model could be given, with a clear message that this paper focuses only on a subsection, which seems to be the first 3 boxes in the second line of the model presented in Figure 1. The body of the paper could be presented in terms of those 3 boxes, with clear links to the evidence in support of each step: creating the product based on the review, soliciting input, and disseminating the product. By starting with a heading on the problem, the impression is given that the whole model will be covered in full. It would be better to warn readers up front that this is only about a subpart, as noted above, and provide more depth on the parts that are the focus of this report.