Reviewer’s report

Title: Understanding childhood asthma in focus groups: perspectives from mothers of different ethnic backgrounds

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Reviewer: Dr Chris Griffiths

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Advice on publication: Accept after revision, which I do not need to see

1. Thank you for asking me to review this paper. It addresses a neglected area which is of considerable relevance to the many clinicians managing asthma in a multicultural society. The authors are to be congratulated on successfully carrying out focus groups in adults from different ethnic groups - (something the reviewer has tried to do without success).

Minor comments
2. The authors draw reasonable conclusions from the data. They could provide a little more detail on their qualitative methodology - for instance, which method of analysis did they use, were they testing prior ideas of their own or were they using grounded theory, how did the analysis evolve, did ongoing analysis and constant comparison of data guide further sampling or analysis? This would help comparison with related analyses.

3. The authors could also relate, where possible, their observations to the health belief models of the different ethnic groups, for instance, comments on avoidance of cold foods in the Bangladeshi group could relate to humoral features of the Ayurvedic tradition. Aside from the belief in a contagious element to asthma in the Bangladeshi group. There is a striking overlap in many of the aetiological beliefs. They might also point out the lack of mention of stress as a precipitant of an asthma attack, which in the reviewer’s experience is common in white and south Asian adults with asthma, and which was found to be important in children a recent Lancet paper (Sandberg

4. The manuscript is clearly written and adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

**Competing interests:**

None declared.