Reviewer’s report

Title: Validation study of the Chinese Early Development Instrument (CEDI)

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Reviewer: Mary E Young

Reviewer’s report:

The authors’ aim to adapt the Early Development Instrument to the Chinese context (CEDI) and to examine its validity and reliability are well carried out. The methods and the reporting of the analysis are clearly described. The manuscript was succinctly written. The title and abstract are accurate and convey the study.

This study to validate a Chinese version of a population-based child development outcome measure is timely and an important contribution to the field of early child development or population health. Presently in public health or in education sector, we have limited outcome measures to assess the impact of interventions or have information on the state of children’s wellbeing. Hence validating such an instrument is an important contribution to both health and education policy and practice.

The issue on the limitation of the study that the authors raised – predominance of girls in the sample may not be a significant deterrent to the validation of the instrument, given the small sample size and non-representative sampling structure.

Of note, for discretionary revision (or clarification) -- it is worthwhile to emphasize (even though the authors did mentioned that CEDI is a tool to assess school readiness in Chinese populations) that CEDI is a population tool to assess children’s development at aggregate level and it is not mean to assess children’s school readiness at the individual level. This clarification is crucial for parents and teachers, so not to give the impression that it is used to detect children not ready for school and be held back.

Further analysis could be done to validate the tool for rural population and compare inter-rater reliability. A question to the authors for future work – could the CEDI be simplified or reduced further to fewer items than the current 103 items? Often in developing country context, the length of the instrument is an issue when the capability of the “KG teacher” is limited.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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.