Reviewer’s report

Title: Child, Neglect and Oral Health

Version: 2 Date: 11 June 2013

Reviewer: GRAMMATI SARRI

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Major compulsory revisions

1) Although the authors have attempted to investigate an important public health issue, child neglect, the aim of the paper was not met by the data collected in the study. The authors stated that they wanted to investigate the association between dental caries and neglect in children, however the factors selected in the paper as indicative of neglect do not correspond to any of the established definitions of child neglect. Is it dental neglect the sub type of child neglect that the authors refer to? One of the main improvements in the research of child neglect is the division of different types of neglect for example physical, emotional, health care neglect (World Health Organization, Dubowitz). In addition, it is well known the association of most of the selected factors of child neglect with dental caries experience. What the authors want to add to this topic with the data collected in the study? The authors would need to seriously revisit this part.

2) The authors have focused solely on the parental responsibility of neglect and ignoring the well established social determinants of child neglect. Although the parents have primary responsibility on children's health care, including oral care, the introduction gives only one sided part of the available evidence in the area. For example sentences such as the following "Thus, caregivers must get information and provide the child with preventive and restorative care” are very strong and in a way misleading as the provision of relevant information regarding child oral health prevention and dental treatment is not necessarily dependent on parents but also the availability and affordability of services. The introduction is lengthy and needs reorganizing.

3) There were serious statistical misinterpretations. This is a descriptive study which explores associations but not proving causality. There are a couple of associations highlighted by the authors that were not statistically significant (p<0.05). The section of results needs to be rearranged and the language used needs to more methodologically appropriate. The tables are not very informative.

4) The discussion needs to focus on the main conclusions and its interpretations. More general conclusions were made than the authors could support with their data collection and analysis. The language used needs improvement in order to be more scientifically sound.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.