Reviewer's report

Title: A qualitative analysis of immigrant population health practices in the Girona Healthcare Region

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Reviewer: Kenny Kwong

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I would like to commend the investigators to take on this study to assess the possible effect of family organization in the health practice of specific immigrant populations in comparison with native populations in Spain and understand the significances of sexual and reproductive health practices and to assess the perceptions of immigrant populations, native populations, and professionals regarding health and the health system. The findings, presented on page 10-11 regarding the view of healthcare professionals were particularly helpful to advance the knowledge and understanding of specific health practice and attitudes of these immigrant groups. The investigators also did a fine job in the discussion section to bring the reader back to the major study objectives as listed on page 3. But I do have some fundamental issues that need to be addressed as described below. I have major concern with the methodology, the presentation of findings to link the themes and the quotes, and the discussion of study findings.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. On page 2 Abstract, under Background, be more specific what immigrant populations under study. Under Methods, the investigators stated that the research was based on linguistic analysis of oral discourse but in the main body of the manuscript, the term “discursive analysis” was used. Were they the same?

2. On page 3 Background, the investigators indicated that this study was part of a two-phase project, one quantitative and the other qualitative. It is necessary to provide some background information of the main study. What were the overall study objectives of the main study? Other than the methodological rationales (findings being extensive and in a generalized sense in quantitative study design versus in-depth exploration in qualitative phase), do the two phases have the same or different study objectives?

3. On page 4 under Methods, the investigators provided six profiles of participants. What sampling methods were used to select these different groups of participants? How many participants in each of these six profiles of participants in this study?

4. There was no mention if the study was reviewed and approved by any Institutional review Board for the protection of human subjects.

5. How many discussion groups and semi-structured interviews were completed (page 4)?
6. The investigators described the specific study aims of this qualitative study (page 3). Please provide information on study instruments including discussion group guide and semi-structured interview questions.

7. Since the study was conducted with specific immigrant groups, did the investigators field test the study instruments to ensure their cultural relevancy for study participants?

8. The investigators indicated a number of steps (interviews and discussion groups recorded digitally, transcription of all oral content, and comparison between oral and paper materials) to enhance the quality and reliability of the data for its subsequent analysis. What additional steps and procedures were used to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of these qualitative responses?

9. Under Results on page 6, since the study aims were relatively broad and the study included many different sub-groups of participants, the investigators only showed a few quotations to illustrate the major themes. For clarity, it would be very helpful to provide a table or diagram to summarize all the major themes that emerged from interviews and discussion groups, for example the intensity and frequency of responses among these participants, the distributions of the reporting of both positive and negative experiences, in order to demonstrate that these selected quotes were representative of the entire sample of study participants.

10. On a number of occasions, the selection of the quotes by the participants did not represent the themes well. For example on page 6, under family structure, the themes were “The role of men and women differ in all cases in the groups of immigrant studied… the woman assuming the “emotional role” of caring for the family, the children and the home, and the man assuming the role of provider of material (economic) support… the roles of man-woman couple are clearly differentiated, the man takes decisions on economic aspects and family planning, and the woman is in charge of caring for the children and the home…” However, only a few brief quotes of women from Morocco and Gambia were provided but the quotes did not illustrate these specific themes and had no mention at all the men’s roles in the family. Without quotes from men about their roles, the discussion of the themes of gender role expectations in these immigrant groups became suggestive and was not fully supported by the quotes. Also on page 7, the investigators indicated that “With regard to the women from the Moroccan discussion group, differences were detected in terms of practices of caring for sexual and reproductive health depending on where they came from (village or city, north or south of the country) and the generation. Thus, people from villages located a long way from cities and older generations (over 40 years of age) have similar conceptions to those expressed by the Gambian women with regard to sexual and reproductive health…” However such major findings of different sexual and reproductive health practices among different sub-groups based on their geographical residence and age were not illustrated in the quotes. Were these findings derived from the quantitative study phase or from this qualitative study?
11. Some of the quotes were hard to comprehend, for instance on page 8 under the use of health resources, “Woman from subsaharan Africa: ‘My doctor, her… Maite, very good. What she say me now, do you want to change doctors? But I am happy with her’”, “Native man: ‘If I’m not well, it hasn’t happened very often, I come to see my GP’”,

12. The investigators provided two figures derived from ATLAS.ti to display the views of users and healthcare professionals. These diagrams seem to be very difficult to comprehend. To assist readers to make sense of these diagrams, provide guidance in the narrative on how to read and interpret these diagrams.

13. Under Discussion, state any limitations of this study. What are the implications of study findings for health care services and policy? What future research questions will the investigators recommend for further inquiry in this area?

Minor Essential Revisions

1. On page 3, the investigators presented brief statistics on census of total populations in Spain and the growing number of immigrants in different regions. Since this study focused on specific immigrant groups, including Moroccan women, sub-Saharan African women, immigrant and native men, it will be helpful to provide more contextual information on census, demographic characteristics, and any existing literature on health care experiences of these sub-populations.

2. On page 4, under study design, the investigators stated the criteria of foreign groups object. Clarify who they are and where they specifically are coming from.

Discretionary Revisions

1. On page 5, the investigators indicated that the study was implemented from a discursive perspective and then elaborated in details the steps of discursive analysis. It will be helpful if the investigators can explain briefly what qualitative study paradigm or method (for example grounded theory approach, narrative analysis, etc) was used.

2. Was there any conceptual framework to guide the design of main study objectives and questions for this study?

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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.