Reviewer's report

Title: Public Perceptions and Attitudes towards Thalassaemia: Influencing factors in a Multi-racial Population

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Reviewer: peyman Jafari

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The study is well-conducted and the findings are of interest. I have outlined some areas where the manuscript could be improved:

Major compulsory revisions:

Abstract
The “Method” section should mention that the score of knowledge for each patient is recorded as a value between 0 and 21 where higher scores indicate better knowledge.

In the “Results” section the last sentence (Thus, this clearly indicates...) should be deleted since it is appropriate for the Conclusion section.

Body of the article

Introduction
Page 4, line 16:
The sentence “studies on knowledge, attitudes and practices related to thalassaemia are relatively scarce in Asia” needs reference. Here is an example:

Methods
Page 5, line 5:
The sample size cannot be calculated with the information presented in the method section. It is unclear how the total sample size was drawn. Please elaborate.

Page 7, line 7:
Moreover, the authors have mention that internal consistency was considered satisfactory if the coefficient was at least 0.6. However, in literature values of at least 0.7 for Cronbach’s alpha coefficient indicate acceptable internal consistency. Therefore, 0.6 should be changed into 0.7.

Page 7, line 10 & 12- page 12, line 9- page 25 Table 2:
Multivariate and multiple regression: These two terms are not exchangeable (a common mistake in the literature). Multivariate regression is the analysis which deals with many dependent variables, while in multiple regression there is one dependent variable. Therefore, the word of “multivariate” should be changed into “multiple”.

Results
Page 23, Table 1;
It was better if the authors used the multiple logistic regression for computing odds ratios in table 1.

Discussion:
The author should compare their results with those of other similar studies in details in discussion section.

Page 12, line 5 and page 16, line 4:
In the first paragraph of the “Discussion” section authors have mentioned that “Ethnic disparities in awareness of thalassaemia are not known and this warrants further investigation.” Also in the last paragraph of the “Discussion” section they have stated: “The study is unique because the sample is multi-ethnic, which has not been reported elsewhere.” However, the following citation shows that this work is not the only multi-ethnic study in this area.


Page 13, line 20:
The author stated that: “In general, termination of pregnancy is not a consideration in the Asians because of a complex web of moral, cultural and traditional religious values of the family and community. A number of studies showed religious beliefs to be associated with refusal for prenatal diagnosis and termination of affected fetuses among high risk couples [10,17,18].” They have cited studies from Cyprus and Britain to support this argument. However, the authors unfortunately ignored some relevant related work in this area. I recommend the authors include the following very relevant reference whose study subjects share religious beliefs with Malaysian population. Here is two examples:


Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

No