Reviewer’s report

Title: Access to healthcare and alternative health-seeking strategies among undocumented migrants in Denmark

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Reviewer: Heide Castaneda

Reviewer’s report:

The topic of this study is important and, to my knowledge, unique in its focus on access to health care for unauthorized migrants in Denmark. The authors show a clear knowledge and understanding of the situation on the ground, and have provided some intriguing qualitative results in this paper. I have some recommendations for improvement, which I have outlined below.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Methods section: Please clarify how the 10 undocumented migrants were recruited. Is this a convenience sample, a snowball sample, etc? How were they identified? Later the authors note that all were from either Bangladesh, India, or Nepal.

2. Related to this, since all participants were from either Bangladesh, India, or Nepal, the authors should briefly describe the history of migration from these countries to Denmark. They should also provide some perspective for the reader by assessing how typical these countries are; are most of the 1,000-5,000 undocumented migrants in Denmark from these regions? If not, what are other common countries of origin? Is it a very heterogenous population?

3. The paper is a bit unbalanced in that the sections on methods and discussion are disproportionately well developed, while the results section is thinner (many quotes with only a few sentences connecting each theme). I would suggest deleting a few of the quotes and providing a bit more description/elaboration within the results section. As an example, on p. 8 there is a sentence that reads, "other undocumented migrants reported being aware of all symptoms, even minor symptoms." This (and similar short summary sentences) could be elaborated with a better discussion of the implications.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the Introduction (third paragraph, page 2), the authors state that payment may be requested for services based on the Danish Health Act. It should be clarified how the appropriate fees would be determined (for example, is it supposed to be based on the standard fees negotiated by the national health service/medical association?)

2. It is noteworthy that Denmark, like Germany, has criminalized some aspects of access to care for undocumented migrants (Introduction, last sentences of third
paragraph, page 2). I would suggest the authors discuss this situation a bit further, for example by describing the legislation that impedes activities and citizen involvement.

3. In the results section, it would be helpful to introduce quotes with a brief description of the participant (e.g., "a 38-year man from India") or a bit of biographical data (occupation, illnesses faced) to contextualize the quote.

4. p.6: The quote from the participant that states, "If the doctor is a very good Danish person, and good citizen, he will call the police..." is fascinating in that it reveals the contradictions in how migrants view a "good Danish citizen" (they will help if they are "good", but they will also call the police if they are "good"). It would be interesting to comment on this in your paper. Similarly, the example of the nurse who contacted the police (p.9) speaks to this as well. Both of these examples reveal interesting contradictions for migrants and medical personnel that could be elaborated upon further.

5. p. 11: In the section entitled, "Results in perspective," end of second paragraph, the issue is not just the use of nonprescription medication but the unregulated used of illegally obtained (prescription) medications such antibiotics, which can increase resistant strains.

Congratulations to the authors on a very interesting and important paper, which I look forward to seeing published soon.

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

**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