Reviewer's report

Title: Is all-cause and cause-specific mortality lower among refugees and immigrants than among native Danes? - a historical prospective cohort study

Version: 2 Date: 4 March 2012

Reviewer: Itamar Santos

Reviewer's report:

General comments: it is a generally well written article of death incidence in Danish immigrant (including refugees) population, compared to matched native controls. The background section is a succinct and clear introduction to the work. The study is clear and well designed, but some adjustments could add even more value to the paper. My suggestions are below:

Major compulsory reviews

1. Abstract: (1) There was no abstract in the text for review.
2. Methods: (1) Although it may be a little difficult to establish a complete and unequivocal correlation of ICD-8 and ICD-10, classification based on ICD-8 should not preclude determination of the frequency of neoplastic and cardiovascular causes of death, as groups. If possible, these deaths should be added accordingly in cause-specific analyses.
3. Results: (1) It is desirable to make a brief commentary on baseline characteristics, to clarify to the reader what the sample is like and to assure that matchmaking was successful.
4. Discussion: (1) Are there any estimates on the rate of remigration? As these individuals are more prone to be considered alive, high rates could markedly influence the results. A sensitivity analysis using reasonable estimates, considering these individuals dead (or, at least, with a mortality rate similar to the adjusted number of those who remained in Denmark), would add more value to the article.

Minor compulsory reviews

1. Methods: (1) How the income database works, and how data is uploaded in this system? Are there any biases this information may be susceptible to?
2. Discussion: (1) in “the healthy migrant effect(x)”, what does (x) stand for? Is it just a typo?
3. Conclusion: (1) The text “Moreover, to prevent ethnic inequalities in mortality becoming more disadvantageous in the future, public health authorities should discourage the further adoption of unhealthy risk behaviour. Preventive strategies could extend to screening for diabetes and cancer-related infectious diseases among risk groups upon arrival.” although commonsense, is beyond the results of the study and should be removed.
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