Reviewer’s report

Title: Oral health status and behaviours of preschool children in Hong Kong

Version: 1 Date: 21 May 2012

Reviewer: Erika Lencova

Reviewer’s report:

Essential Revisions

1. English should be revised.

See e.g.:
Page 7, line 3: the sentence: ‘Ten children …were uncooperative for examination or have medical history…’
Page 8, line 3: ‘There were 36% children….’
Page 9, line 6: ‘This study had a very high response rate was obtained.’
P. 9, line 17: ‘…from 46% at four years old, to 78% at six years old…’;
Table 2: ‘Use other cleansing aids’; etc.

2. Abstract:

2a The abstract is not structured in compliance with the BMC requirements for research articles (Background; Methods; Results; Conclusions).

2b Background and Methods: not: “dental caries status”, but: “dental caries experience”

2c The authors claim that the objective of the study was also to assess ´gingival health condition´ of the subjects. However, results for gingival health (parameters; scoring) are not reported in the paper.

2d The Methods section of the abstract should describe statistical tests used.

2e The Conclusions section of the manuscript is too general. It should be reworded in order to better reflect the study findings.

3. Manuscript:

3a The manuscript should be properly formatted according to the sample BMC article.

Background Section:

3b What is meant by the statement: ‘Eliminating dental caries experience is seemingly impossible through preventive schemes’?

3c The study objective stated in the manuscript (p. 5, line 1) no longer includes gingival health.

The Methods Section:
3d On how many subjects was the calibration exercise carried out?

3e As the paper is intended for the readers of BMC Public Health, it is necessary to explain the dmft index used including its dt, mt and ft fractions.

3f It should be clearly stated; at what level the dental caries was detected (i.e. the detection threshold). Inclusion of incipient caries lesions would enhance the study findings.

3g It should be also clearly stated, which criteria were used to score the Parental Dental Knowledge as Poor, Moderate or Good.

3h What criteria (e.g. which index) were used for the assessment of gingival bleeding?

The Results Section:

3i The results of the gingival bleeding assessments should be provided.

3j The authors refer to the study by Chu et al., 1999 and compare the study findings of the two studies. Was the methodology (namely the disease detection threshold) of the two studies the same?

The Discussion Section

3k The section should be titled ´Discussion´, not ´Discussions´.

3l The section ´Summary´ should be labelled ´Conclusions´ (see BMC formatting requirements for research articles).

The List of Abbreviations Section

3m The list of abbreviations has not been included in the manuscript (e.g. dmft, HDK- Tables 3 and 4 etc.)

The References Section

3n The references should be formatted in compliance with the BMC Public Health reference style.

Tables

3o Check the Table 1 title: ´Mean dt, mt, ft, dmft scores and according to gender, age and birth place´. The title of the table should not exceed 15 words. All tables reporting SD should indicate that in the first row (this is missing in Table 1).

Figures

3p Figure 1: The columns of the graph do not correspond to the respective values (tooth codes).

Discretionary Revisions

Results

4a For the high-risk caries experience groups identified in the study, is it possible to provide the odds ratio values?

4b For better comparability of the study findings with other studies, the authors should consider providing the Significant caries index scores for each age group.
Additional files
4c The parental questionnaire used should be provided as Additional file.

**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.