Reviewer’s report

Title: Language Barrier and its Relationship to Diabetes and Diabetic Retinopathy

Version: 1 Date: 12 June 2012

Reviewer: Zumin Shi

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This is an interesting study and has public health significance. It is in general well written. However I have some concerns on the analyses and the results.

Major:
1. The distribution of age is quite different between Tamil speaking and English speaking Indians. The results could be highly confounded by the effect of age. Statistical adjustment may not fully control the age effect. A stratification of age is needed. Interaction between age and language should be tested.
2. Are other lifestyle factors available including diet, physical activity available as well as medication? These are potential mediating variables between language and health outcomes. In the current analysis, only information on smoking is provided. Actually the prevalence of current smoking is lower among Tamil-speaking Singapore Indian than those English speaking Indian. How would the authors interpret this? Is smoking a risk factor of diabetes in the whole sample?
3. Tamil-speaking Indian seems to have a better blood lipid profile than the English speaking Indian (Table 1). The author did not try to explain this difference. Does it suggest that Tamil-speaking Indian has a better control of blood lipid than the others?

Minor
1. Results from logistic regression should be presented in a Table as these are the main findings.
2. Figure 1 and 2 are not informative unless they are age adjusted.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests