Reviewer's report

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

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Reviewer: Shih-Jen Chen

Reviewer's report:

This population-based report suggests that language proficiency is not only a risk factor for higher prevalence of T2DM, DR, VTDR or VI in a multi-ethnic country where English is the working language, but also contribute different proportion (unexplained) to the prevalence by the decomposition model.

The merits of this study are the first to demonstrate the effect of language barrier of T2DM and DR and the use of decomposition method in predicting the importance of this barrier.

Several points need to be clarified:

1. The prevalence of T2DM, DR, VTDR and VI are different between the text (page 10, line 2) and Table 2. Is this because of the predictive model used in the Oaxaca model? If yes, why and how.

2. The logistic regression results of all the covariates in different disease categories should be demonstrated in another table. For example, age played different role in the explained portion between the prevalence of T2DM, VI (decreased difference) and DR, VTDR (increased difference). This effect could be due to different composition of age between these 4 categories.

3. Based on the Oaxaca method, what kind of regression assumption is made and is the standard errors corrected?

4. As shown in figure and table 2, the language barrier affected the visual acuity in all disease categories and explained almost half for the difference in the VI. Are there other biological factors, e.g., cataract or refractive error, which account for this?

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.