Reviewer's report

Title: Assessing the Healthy Immigrant Effect for Older Chinese Immigrants: A Cross-sectional Study

Version: 1

Date: 11 April 2014

Reviewer: Victor Chang

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I would like to add to my previous comments that with the recent interest in air pollution problems in China, this data becomes relevant as a well characterized control group for comparisons with studies that may be done to answer similar questions in China, and air pollution studies in general. The sample size is adequate for the analyses performed.

General

This is a secondary analysis of baseline data from the CAFEH project, with the goal of determining whether a healthy immigrant effect is present for Chinese immigrant populations in the US, and how health status may change over time. Health data is limited on well defined immigrant populations, such as those in enclaves, and the manuscript addresses this knowledge gap. Models were developed to compare prevalence of disease and biomarkers in the 2 populations compared. Limitations are recognized by the authors.

Discretionary revisions

1) The CAFEH study examines 3 neighborhoods that abut I-93. It is implied, but not explicitly stated that the Chinese population studied comes from Boston Chinatown. This should be clarified in the methods section as one might conclude that responses from Chinese residents in all 3 neighborhoods.

2) Asthma is a childhood disease. It may not be as highly prevalent in adults, although this is an air pollution study and rates may change over time.

3) Can a claim be made about changes over time? Twenty years is not a long time. However, staying in an enclave could have a protective effect as well.

4) Some of the references come from Canadian studies. The authors may find this reference helpful.


5) Another potential shortcoming is the lack of acculturation measures and socioeconomic status indicators in the original study design, which was for air pollution exposure. Measures of social stress might be a proxy variable for this.
Minor essential revisions
1) Spelling
Engrained or ingrained
2) Tables
In Table 1, p values have been entered for some of the 95% confidence intervals

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 have no competing interests