Reviewer’s report

Title: Health related quality of life of immigrant children: towards a new pattern in Germany?

Version: 2
Date: 13 May 2014
Reviewer: Ulrike Ravens-Sieberer

Reviewer’s report:

Review of the paper:
Health related quality of life of immigrant children: towards a new pattern in Germany?

This interesting study investigated HRQoL in immigrant children aged 3 to 5 years. To assess HRQoL, the Kiddly-KINDL was used in a short version (12 items) as self-report. Besides HRQoL other important variables were considered. The study has potential, but clearly needs revision due to usual forms of presentation and interpretation in scientific publishing and to the language.

Major revision:
The authors need to check the description in the methods and results section. More clarity is needed. Furthermore, the interpretations for the discussion are questionable at some points. The Conclusions need also revision concerning the content.

Additionally, the paper needs language editing by a native speaker with scientific background (e.g. concerning the use of articles and prepositions). Some sentences are rather long and a bit complicated. A native speaker may help rephrasing these sections. Concerning method and result sections including, more clarity is needed. The Tables need corrections leaning on conventions for scientific publishing.

Main text:
Background:
2nd paragraph: the complete paragraph is not easy to follow. Could the authors please rephrase and maybe split the sentences?
3rd paragraph, 4th sentence: please replace assessment with perception Last paragraph, 1st sentence: I would recommend to rephrase and maybe split this sentence for a better understanding (e.g. "In Germany, % of children have migrant backgrounds. In towns, this rate was even higher ranging from 45 to 65%. However, there are no studies yet investigating HRQoL in this population. The present study...").

Methods:
Design:
5th sentence: Please do not start sentences using numbers or write the numbers at the beginning of the sentences as words ("Ninety-six.").

8th sentence: I would recommend just to describe the sample, not to emphasize or value the importance of specific characteristics. "Children in the investigated sample have predominantly .."

9th sentence: I would think about introducing this definition maybe at the end of the background section after the aims? The phrasing seems a bit unusual to me.

10th sentence: Could you please add the months?

Measures:
1st sentence: This is general practice and needs no specific mentioning at least not in the methods part. Maybe add this aspect to the aims in the background section?

Kiddy-KINDL
First sentence: I am not sure it is usual to introduce an abbreviation in a subtitle. Could this please be done in the 1st sentence of the paragraph instead?

3rd sentence: The reference for the development of the short version is missing here.

5th sentence: Please rephrase this sentence, use e.g. "Scale scores of the KK range from 0 to 100."

6th sentence: Please rephrase this sentence, e.g. "We administered the self-report version of the KK to children aged 3 to 5 years."

Could you please mention here that the original version was validated for children of at least 4 years?

Vienna Developmental Test
2nd sentence: Please use "In the present study."

3rd and 4th sentences: This is not quite clear, please rephrase these sentences. I assume for each scale responses of 3 items were summed up? Please add information about the handling of missing data.

Last paragraph:
Please use the same structure here as in the section describing the measures. That is, please start with socio-economic data. Maybe - even better - the authors may think about replacing the sentences of this paragraph (add the into the descriptions of the measures). The last sentence with the hypothesis rather belongs to the aims (Background).

Statistical analysis:
Subtitle: Please do not capitalize analysis 1st paragraph, 1st sentence: Please replace "on the overall whole sample" with "using the total sample"

2nd and 3rd sentences: Please rephrase this sentence, e.g. "Groups of children with migrant and native-born children were compared in HRQoL. Differences in
means were tested using." Which method was used for mean difference testing? Were regressions additionally conducted?

5th sentence: Please replace "developmental" variables. Which variables are meant exactly?

5th to 7th sentences: Please rephrase this section. The proceeding and the analysed models need to be described clearer. As far as I understand by now, it was a 2step approach (?). The authors may write something like: "At first, x linear regression models investigated the effect of each variable (..) on ???" Finally, a linear regression model was analysed.."

Last paragraph, 1st sentence: The use of baseline data should be mentioned earlier if necessary at all in this paper?

2nd sentence: Missing data handling may be not useful in this way for calculating sumscores as far as I see.

Results and discussion:
Please create a section named results and another section named discussion. Please restructure these sections correspondingly. Limitations belong to the discussion.

1st paragraph: Please do not begin sentences with numbers or write them in words.

1st sentence: I would prefer to report the response rate in the methods section describing the study.

2nd sentence: Please rephrase, e.g. "Genders were approximately equally distributed in the present sample (52.7% girls)."

Last sentence: Please mention the largest and the smallest groups.

2nd paragraph: Results "showed", but cannot "prove" based on this selected and small sample.

2nd sentence: Please remove "marginally" before "significant" and please use the usual interpretations due to p-values.

Page 11, 1st paragraph. The description is not clear. Please rephrase this section, especially 3rd to 5th sentence.

2nd paragraph: Please overdo the interpretation. Findings are "in line with " or not (2nd sentence”). 3rd sentence: Please start with "We found.".

5th sentence: What is meant with "...in variance with."?
Please overdo the following sentences for clarification.

Page 12, 2nd paragraph: As far as I understood there is no concrete comparison to other studies possible due to the fact that a specific short form was used and the age-group differed. This sections needs to be overdone.

Page 13, 3rd paragraph: Do the authors really assume representativeness of their sample? I do not think this assumption is appropriate. Representativeness should also be investigated in any study that aims it. Please overdo the complete paragraph considering scientific rules/what is usual in science.
Conclusion:
Please rephrase the sentences for more clarity and better phrasing. And please think about your conclusions again. The assumption of a different pattern is based on a comparison that may not be valid. Please redo the conclusions in the Abstract correspondingly.

TABLES:
Table 1: Please do not capitalize "percentage" here and please redo the Table, e.g. Area of education, please mention in the following lines only the specific areas. And please start the Table with the main variables (migrant versus native-born; maybe the authors have an idea of to gather migrant versus native-born in a term, something like "state of."). Table 2: Please write "Migrant" and do not capitalize "native" or the second "mean". Please format the Table, subgroups should be presented in another format than Group descriptions or maybe after a tab. The authors should consistently use one term throughout the paper. However, "native-born" and "native" is used. And please use consistently "p-value" or "significance" in your tables (see Table 4).

Table 3: Please mention the name of the measure not only "KK" and check capitalization. And do report the Total ("Overall") results not in the first, but in the last line.

Tables 4 and 5: I would highly recommend restructuring and using another format of the page. Age, gender, . should only be mentioned once, model results could be presented in different columns.