Reviewer's report

Title: Factors influencing self-rated health among North Korean defectors living in South Korea

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Reviewer: Kevin Pottie

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June 10th, 2014
Peer Review

Title: Factors influencing self-rated health among North Korean defectors living in South Korea
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Thank you for the opportunity to read this interesting and timely paper. Refugees from North Korea have increased exponentially over the past few decades. South Korea has played a significant role in resettling these refugees. This research uses a sample of refugees and evaluation and logistic regression analysis to study elements that are associated with self reported health measures. There is a vice description of sample history.

Major Revisions

There is a need to include a reference to show how self rated health is related to general health status. This currently is not in the document.

It is also important to explain why the categories for self rated health were not the usual: excellent, very good, good, fair and poor. This research group used excellent, good, fair, bad and poor; I wonder if this is an English translation issue. Because it is important to line of the measurement categories with those of thousands of other papers on self-reported health. If indeed this group used an alternative categories there will be a need to show the references, primary, measurement research, behind this alternative category.

Finally the authors report an average for the self reported health outcome. Yet is was not a continuous various to start, it was categorical. This is not the ideal statistical way to deal with this measurement questions. Normally the 5 categories would be grouped into good and poor health, making it a dichotomous variable, and this would be used for logical regression or multivariate analysis. Because there are 5 categories and 3 respond to poor health, the idea of using an average introducing a bias as several levels.

There needs to be an explicit limitation section added to the discussion. Currently one limitation is mentioned, but others are needed.
Minor Essential Revisions

There are a number of interesting findings in this research. However, this is a cross sectional survey with a modest sample, and I feel often the authors are not recognizing the limitations of their findings when they make interpretations and comparisons to other work which is often large samples and longitudinal. There is a real risk in overstating these results.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?- yes,

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? – major revision concerns noted regarding the self reported health and later the statistical analysis of average in a categorical variable.

3. Are the data sound? Small, non random sample, well described in terms of limitations.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Appears to

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? The authors have done a good job highlighting interesting findings, but not so good a job of highlighting the limitations of certainty of results, and not so well in terms of being careful not to overstate the certainty of their results.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Not yet

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Some, but there is a clear Korean literature focus, literature from other countries relating to refugees would be relevant.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? yes

9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable