Reviewer's report

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

Version: Date: 16 June 2014

Reviewer: Bengt Arnetz

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript deals with factors affecting self-rated health among North Korean refugees having resettled in South Korea in 2007. This is a potentially important study, since health, and perception of health, is a determinant of the future vocational, social, mental, and somatic wellbeing of refugees.

MAJOR COMPULSARY REVISIONS

References are too limited to Korean research. The authors are encouraged to expand their literature and generalize their findings when appropriate.

ABSTRACT: State whether interviews were structured, used a survey.
Introduction: None

METHODS: Exemplary description of loss-to-follow-up process and data.
Please clarify how participants could be divided into having been in South Korea less than vs more than 18 months when ALL study participants arrived between January and December, 20007 (p 4, l 11).
Was trauma in South Korea assessed as well, or only during life in North Korea and during the transit phase?

RESULTS: Table 1, Means (SD) and Beta used in the same column. unclear.
Income, is this correct, considering a substantially higher amount listed in the discussion section?
Table 2. Specify type of regression in headline, linear.
Results are otherwise presented in a clear and concise fashion.

DISCUSSION:
Discussion is mostly supported by results presented.
P 9, l 17, change < = to >= 18 months.
P 10, l 5 (last paragraph). Sentence does not read correctly. ...resilience plays a role in mediating the decrease of physical and mental adaptation... I assume the authors mean increase in mental and somatic health. That is, the opposite from what has been written.
CONCLUSIONS: Both here, and implied in the Discussion section, authors highlight the need to reinforce refugee assistance programs. This might be true, BUT, based on THIS study, what motivates this statement. For example, Table 2, what findings of significance there would be addressed by means of refugee assistance programs. Please expand your reasoning.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS
The term influence, influencing is used throughout the manuscript, including in the title. Since this is a cross-sectional study, terms such as association should be used.
P 4, l 7, change affect this status to are associated with this status or some other term indicating this is not a cause-and-effect study, but cross-sectional.
Background: P 3, l 11, provide examples on tertiary countries.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'