Reviewer's report

Title: Asthma beliefs among mothers and children from different ethnic origins living in Amsterdam, the Netherlands

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Reviewer: Jim Pink

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Reviewers Comments

I am pleased to see that this article has been rewritten, as I think the study highlights important issues regarding asthma beliefs in ethnically diverse populations. The approach taken is reasonable and the results appropriate. However, further to my comments in my previous review I would like to share my ongoing concerns about the written English of this article. I have spent several hours going through the manuscript and although much easier to read than the previous submission there are still several potential weaknesses highlighted below, which you may wish to address.

· Introduction – paragraph 1.

Inhalation corticosteroids – this may be an international variation, but the British National Formulary refers to inhaled corticosteroids.

· Box 1 –

“Initially their stay was intended to be temporary, but in the 1970s it became clear they would stay longer or even permanently” – what does this add?

“Of the Turks….. 84% has only primary education” – should read “have only primary education”. Same problem in next sentence.

“a relatively high percentage of these migrants are unemployed” – some figures or a reference is needed here.

· Material and methods – paragraph 1.

“an attempt was made to gain a well balanced reflection…..” – do you mean a well balanced representation?

“mothers” and “parents” are used interchangeably. Although the tables highlight that only mothers and not fathers were involved, it may be worth mentioning this in the methods section.

Material and methods – paragraph 2 (focus groups)

“The Turkish and Moroccan mothers……” This sentence implies that the Dutch
mothers were not placed in groups with facilitators of the same ethnic background. I’m sure this isn’t the case.

“some examples of questions” – there is no need to write “some”.

“when do you or does your child take his medication?” – this is grammatically clumsy and may imply that the mother is also asthmatic. I would suggest that “when does your child take his medication?” is a clearer question.

“do you think in case of appropriate asthma treatment, the best thing to do is use ICSs daily?” – this is both an awkward sentence grammatically and highlights potential methodological weaknesses in the focus group interviews i.e. having to ask closed questions. You may find that any qualitative reviewers will question your methods here.

· Analysis

Section 2 – is writing “Kleinman” in brackets necessary?

With regard to translation of the responses of the mothers:
- did native speakers read the original transcripts of the focus group interviews or were the translated transcripts retranslated into the native language. This isn’t clear.

· Results – characteristics

“most of those who declined, stated….,” – the comma is unnecessary.

· Results - aetiology

As a general rule, the results section is made clumsier by the statements introducing the qualitative data such as “a comment frequently given by the mothers that exemplifies this feeling was….,” I feel that most of these link statements are unnecessary and many are grammatically awkward.

“However, in spite of the knowledge the children expressed about the aetiology of asthma, the majority of the children were uncertain about the aetiology” – this doesn’t make sense.

“One of the most striking similarities among the mothers was that they seemed to know the asthma could be caused by genetics” – it would be better to say that “asthma has a genetic component”.

“Fortunately it is not present every day” – the explanation by the author that “it” is “asthma” is unnecessary.

“Another similarity that was brought forward….,” I would replace “brought forward” with “highlighted”.

· Results – prognosis

“….shared the belief that the asthma…..” either “their asthma” or just “asthma”
“Because of this idea” – unnecessary

- Results – onset of symptoms

“When discussing the onset of symptoms of asthma……” - writing “which they believed caused their symptoms” is unnecessary.

“which triggers could give symptoms” – “provoke symptoms”

- Results – treatment

“… mothers manage the asthma”

- Results – avoiding triggers

“In particular, avoiding some triggers” – “the avoidance of some triggers”

- Results – medication

“The state of asthma of their children” – “their childrens’ asthma”

“Some of the children were taken off their ICSs…” – this is not clear that it is the mothers rather than the doctors who stop the ICSs.

“Another reason behind…..” it is important to clarify here which mothers you are talking about, else stating that “the Turkish mothers also….“ doesn’t make sense.

“In addition to mentioning side effects…..” – this whole section on alternative therapies needs rewording as it is clumsy.

“Most striking…..” – “It is striking that compared with all of the other mothers…..”

“Also among adolescents, we observed…..” – “We also observed reservations towards medication amongst the adolescents”.

“were not reluctant towards their ICSs” – needs rewording.

“The majority of the children expressed…..” – in this sentence the past tense (told) is mixed with the present tense (taking). Either will do, as long is this is consistent.

- Discussion – para 1

“The idea of never outgrowing asthma…..” – needs rewording.

- Discussion - para 3

“All mothers,” – unnecessary comma.

“In particular, the Dutch mothers were the most concerned about this” – either “the Dutch mothers were particularly concerned about this” or “The Dutch mothers were the most concerned about this”.
“Conducting long term follow up research…..” – MAY provide interesting results.

“the harassments at a young age…..” – needs rewording.

· Discussion - para 4

“Treatment is the topic…..” – “The topic that highlighted the most significant ethnic differences was treatment.”

“The results could be an inadequate patient-clinician communication…….” – consider rewording this sentence.

“This brings us carefully…..” – why carefully?

“no symptoms, no asthma belief” – no need for italics on “belief”

· Discussion – para 6

Why was the number of participants in the study limited?

· Authors’ contribution

“QMvD have” should read “has”.