Reviewer's report

Title: Osteoporosis-related life habits and knowledge about osteoporosis among women in El Salvador: A cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 19 February 2004

Reviewer: Seang-Mei Saw

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The knowledge of osteoporosis among women in El Salvador is an important area of study because gaps in knowledge and behavior may be identified and specific health education messages disseminated. Several methodological concerns need to be addressed: The sample size of 197 is rather small, the sample is a convenient sample and may not be representative of the general population, the participation rate is unknown, and there are no obvious reasons why the age groups 25-34 years, 36-49 years, and over 49 years were chosen.

It is important to describe the knowledge about osteoporosis among Salvadorean women aged 25 years or more, and the relationship between osteoporosis knowledge scores and exercise or calcium intake. However, the identification of other factors related to exercise and calcium intake and their subsequent impact on osteoporosis is of minor importance. The modification of these other secondarily-related factors may not directly prevent osteoporosis.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

1 Details on recruitment and sampling strategies should be included.

2 Describe in greater detail the development of the 8 osteoporosis knowledge questions and rationale for the knowledge score. Were the osteoporosis knowledge questions built from an existing model Eg. the Health Belief Model?

3 Compare the knowledge scores in this study with osteoporosis knowledge scores in other countries.

4 Total calcium intake may also depend on other factors such as intake of other food groups, and intake of vitamins. Similarly, physical activity is multi-dimensional and occupation, recreational activities, other health-preventive behaviors may determine physical activity.

5 The authors could describe in greater detail the implementation, content and effectiveness of
public health education programs.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1 Was informed consent obtained and was there approval by the Ethics Committee?

2 What is the reliability and validity of the dietary portion of the questionnaire?

3 Describe the mean, median and range of age of menopause.

4 Discussion. Page 11 line 21. Knowledge about osteoporosis may not lead to an improvement in "health lifestyle". Only knowledge of questions d) and e) may influence preventive behavior.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None