Reviewer's report

Title: An Insight into the Oral Health Beliefs and Practices amongst mothers from a North London Orthodox Jewish Community

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Reviewer: Stephen Abbott

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Review of: An insight into the Oral Health beliefs and Practices amongst mothers from a North London Orthodox Jewish Community

This is an interesting, well-written account of a small appropriately designed study. I think the following suggestions would improve the paper. I regard no. 1 as Major Compulsory, and the rest as Minor Essential.

1. Some brief comparisons and contrasts between the beliefs and experiences presented here and those of the wider UK community are needed in order for the reader to assess just how different these beliefs are or are not.

2. I think the isolation of this community could be described more carefully. First, the uninformed reader might imagine that the community is more geographically isolated and more concentrated than it actually is (the community shares quite a large area with many other communities). Second, access to information about the NHS is not quite as restricted as suggested (page 15): local GP practices and health centres display the usual NHS leaflets (not least because they have patients from a variety of communities). Third, characterising the community as deprived is in a way misleading: in some respects this is quite a wealthy community, particularly in relation to other ethnic groups in the same borough. But what wealth there is is much more likely than elsewhere to be used in the provision of community facilities such as schools, social care, etc. rather than in supporting affluent individual lifestyles.

3. Page 3, introduction line 7. The population has doubled / will double – between when and when? A date between 1989 and 2011 is needed for this to make sense.

4. Fatalism. The authors regard the informant’s belief in hereditary influences (page 11) as fatalistic. But the quotation suggests to me that the belief is a plausible interpretation of family data (which may of course be wrong). I don't agree with the use of the concept of fatalism here (particularly as the evidence presented is sparse). It is a term that is much more often used of ethnic minorities than of the majority community, and yet, for example, parents of all communities feel unable to control children’s intake of sweets (the same page). Calling this fatalism risks stigmatisation.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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