Reviewer's report

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

**Version: 1 Date:** 15 April 2010

**Reviewer:** Rosamund Harrison

**Reviewer's report:**

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Okay
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Framework analysis needs more description
3. Are the data sound? Yes
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Need more exemplar quotes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Need more exemplar quotes
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Briefly
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Title, abstract could do with some minor revision
9. Is the writing acceptable? Not yet

This qualitative study explores oral health knowledge and beliefs and issues of access to care in a UK Orthodox Jewish community. The method of data collection was a combination of interviews and focus groups. The authors have gleaned some unique insights about this community. However, the quality of the writing needs to be improved prior to publication: the authors have a rambling style, use overly long sentences, poor grammar and tend to repeat themselves. The “unacceptable” writing is unfortunate because the observations are definitely worth reporting. In addition, more exemplar quotes from the data should be included to support the Discussion.

Title: could be changed to “Insights into the oral health beliefs and practices of mothers from a north London Orthodox Jewish Community”

Abstract: the writing needs to be more succinct.

Last line of methods states: “The data were “translated”: no where in the manuscript is the issue of translation (from Hebrew?) mentioned.
Background

Para 1, pg 3. The sentence “This study provides an insight into the oral health beliefs and practices of culturally isolated groups.” Does not belong in the background and should be deleted.

Unfortunately, there are no line numbers in the pdf, but the last sentence should say “58% of those below retirement” Start a new sentence. “Large families together…..”

Para 2, pg 3. Should say “From the mid-19th century, the north London orthodox……..” The way it reads now, it sounds like Nazi Europe was from the mid 19th century! Go on to say “This community (we know it is Jewish!) is predominantly Hasidic; its congregations represent historical links with particular areas of Eastern Europe in their dress style and worship.”

Para 1, pg 4; last sentence: “It is also worth noting that women are likely to access health services with the immediate ........” No need to mention they don’t have a car; that’s no surprise!

Para 2; pg. 4: To avoid repeat of “large” say “The community tends to be segregated by gender; boys and girls attend different schools at both primary and secondary school level. The writers use “and” a lot to link phrase into long run-on sentences; semi-colons are better in many instances.

The rest of this paragraph onto page 5 became confusing; I think what is meant could read:

“This situation results in the limiting of qualifications available to boys and a resultant limitation in accessible and acceptable occupations. The result is that a large proportion of the community have low incomes. Women tend to maintain greatest contact with the wider community; therefore interaction with the family requires effectively accessing mothers. It is within this context that the results presented below need to be understood.”

The authors frequently use the demonstrative pronoun “this” with no object or noun. This grammatical error should be corrected where possible.

Para 1, pg 5: Sentence 2 “This qualitative study is unique as a source of rich information on the oral health beliefs and practices of this previously under researched group” We don’t know yet if is is a “source of rich information” but there is no need to convince us of the goodness of the study; we get it! Delete.

Next bit can be easily condensed: “Because no research is published regarding oral health beliefs and practices or dental attendance and access in this Orthodox Jewish community, the findings of this study will facilitate an understanding of these issues. Such knowledge will inform local dental commissioning groups working to enhance access to dental care for this community.”

What is a “dental commissioning group?”
Further on say, “….Orthodox Jewish community before outlining the methods of the study.” Why use so many words?

Literature Review

Para 1, pg 6: “Orthodox Jewish groups are largely unrecognized in the minority health literature in spite of their barriers and challenges.”

Delete: “There is some evidence of the need for further research in this area however.” Not needed!

Condense: “Studies in Israel [4] and Jerusalem [5,6] have demonstrated a significant relationship between Judaism and health, health behaviour and socioeconomic status.”

Condense: “The picture is both limited and complex because a number of studies challenge the purported link between Judaism and poor health/oral health.”

Para 2, pg 6, Line 1: Say “A few studies have also explored health interventions within these communities”.

Later on: This “what”???……say This APPROACH was found to be particularly beneficial when accompanied by the distribution of toothpastes and toothbrushes.

Para 1, pg 7: Delete 2nd sentence [“Further, there are reported concerns that larger families may have practical difficulties in accessing dental services”] just is not needed as the concept is explained well enough later in the paragraph:

This has implications for oral health should say “Such large families have implications”

“Barriers to dental care are often due to more than one factor, being a mixture of beliefs, perceptions can be condensed to simply say: “Barriers to dental care are a mixture of beliefs, perceptions.” Readers are busy and do not need to contend with these excesses of word; they will give up and move on to another article.

Last sentence can be deleted; no need to tell us about the Results section here.

Top; pg .; last sentence: “This RELATIONSHIP is directly relevant……

Methods

Delete the N and the age range here; this is Results.

A sentence or two actually explaining the “framework approach” would be appreciated. Do not assume all readers understand it. The methods paragraph is a little long; beak into two paragraphs.

Results and Discussion

Para 1:

With the national average family size standing at 2.4 children [19] it
is clear that family sizes within this sample are significantly larger than average [14]. Not great grammar; does a family size “stand??” How about: “With a UK average family size of at 2.4 children [19], family sizes within this sample are significantly larger than average [14].

Para 2
Last sentence could more succinctly read:
“It is essential that these themes are understood in the context of this community whose values are significantly different from those of wider society.”

Lacking contemporary knowledge
Not milk teeth; this is an international scientific journal not the popular press. Why not “primary” or “deciduous’ teeth?

Hereditary influences
Need another quote

Competing priorities
“non-prioritisation” is not a word in the OED; at least put it a made-up word in quotes

The sentence: “In common with the lack of knowledge and related beliefs, competing priorities led to the widespread non-prioritisation of oral healthcare within the home to the extent that mothers took an active role” is a repeat of a previous thought. Delete and write this paragraphs more succinctly.

Need another quote

While these summary sentences are much appreciated, this one can be shortened:
“In summary, this group of mothers demonstrated a lack of contemporary knowledge, cultural influences on diet, problems with competing priorities and health-related fatalism. They welcomed community support.”

Community signposting
Need another quote to support gender preference for dentists.

Inadequate capacity and capability

Dentists “accessed” by this community [not “used” by this community!]

Too frequent use of the verb “raised” how about “mentioned” or stated

Need quotes to support the comments about dental offices, no toys, inflexible opening times, etc. Where did this concept come from?

Generic barriers to care
Where are the exemplar quotes?

Welcoming community support
Another exemplar quote needed

Conclusions
The authors can go through the paper write the Conclusions and the Abstract more succinctly. I hope that some of the above suggestions have been helpful. It would be a shame for readers to not read this interesting work because they got lost in the writing style. The paper needs more quotes and a much more succinct writing style to better convey the intended message.

**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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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