Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence and factors leading to dental caries among pre-school children of Karachi, Pakistan: A cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 28 March 2012

Reviewer: Donald Chi

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The main limitation of the existing analyses is the absence of multivariable regression analyses. The study has a large enough sample size that it would make sense to take the variables from Table 4 to construct regression models that would lead to covariate-adjusted risk ratios (or another outcome measure). This would give readers an idea of how each factor is related to caries (after adjusting for model covariates).

2. The definition of severe caries is not standardized. Adopting a standard definition would help readers to compare caries rates across studies. One possibility is the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry's (AAPD) definition of severe early childhood caries. This definition can be found in the AAPD Reference Manual online.

3. The numbers in Figure 4 are a bit confusing. I am not sure what the column headings (+ ve, -ve) mean. Also, are the numbers presented frequencies, percentages, or mean dmft? This should be made clearer for readers.

Minor Compulsory Revisions

1. In the Background, the authors state that dental caries “is not a life-threatening condition”. While this may be true for most cases, it downplays the importance of oral health – and ignores instances when dental caries is a life threatening disease. This sentence could be revised to improve accuracy.

2. I am not familiar with manjan. Could you include a short explanation?

Discretionary Revisions

None.

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

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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