Reviewer's report

Title: Socioeconomic status and dental healthcare use by preschool children

Version: 1 Date: 12 July 2013

Reviewer: abiola A ADENIYI

Reviewer's report:

General Comments

1. The question posed by the researchers was well defined.
2. The manuscript utilized appropriate and standard measures for reporting the data.
3. The discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data however the suggested edits may necessitate some adjustments in the discussion.
4. The authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished

Minor Essential Revisions:

• The methods utilized were appropriate and fairly well described. However the value of the dental examination for caries and the use of the ECOHIS quality of life measure in this study was not adequately justified. In addition the results obtained from this two parameters were sparsely utilized. Did the investigators interview only mothers, only fathers or a mixture? If they interviewed a mixture of parents what was the proportioning of the respondents? This fact may be important in interpreting the results obtained.

• The limitations of the work were clearly stated. In addition to those in the article, the authors need to consider the role of recall bias in responding to the questionnaire.

• There are minor grammatical errors in the manuscript that requires editing for clarity e.g. sentences 2 and 4 in the abstract.

• Paragraph 3 in the background section contains 3 consecutive sentences that appear to be conveying the same message. The last sentence in the paragraph is not clear. In the method section, the first sentence of the paragraph titled sample should be changed to "a questionnaire-based survey".

• The statement in the discussion which includes the phrase “and our utilization of random sampling prevents selection bias” should be edited to read “our utilization of a probability sampling method”

Major Compulsory Revisions:

• The title should be edited to reveal the objective of the article. A suggested title is: “Socio-economic and psychosocial predictors of dental healthcare use among Brazilian school children"
• In the methodology section there is a need to include the result of the calibration of examiners because of the large number of examiners in order to ensure intra and inter examiner reliability.

• What clinical variables did the researchers investigate? Dental caries only? Reasons for selecting the clinical variables should be given.

• The result section should report on the findings of the ECOHIS scale.

• The researchers report that children who did not brush regularly were less likely to have visited the dentist“ how was regularity of brushing assessed?

• For ease of understanding the authors should provide some information on assessing socioeconomic status. What parameter was used to group the respondents into high or low social status.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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 I have no competing interests