Reviewer's report

Title: Behavioral factors to include in guidelines for lifelong oral healthiness: an observational study in Japanese adults

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Reviewer: Poul Erik Petersen

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MS. Morita I et al., Behavioral factors to include in guidelines for lifelong oral healthiness: an observational study in Japanese adults.

The study is concerned with factors to consider for development of guidelines for lifelong oral healthiness in Japan. At the outset of the paper the reader is introduced to the background and rationality of the 8020 campaign for promotion of oral health of older people in Japan. The Introduction section is most detailed as regards reference to previous literature, otherwise the reader is informed about important potential factors to include in guidelines for improved oral health of older people.

Meanwhile, the actual study has limitations to this process as the study population primarily is limited to younger/middle aged adults. The external validity of the study population is difficult to evaluate. Data are collected through self-administered questionnaires focusing on past diet and lifestyles, when participants were in elementary school and junior high school and when they were in 20s, 30s and 50s. No information on validity of instruments is given and information bias (recall bias) must indeed be expected. Clinical examinations were performed according to WHO 1986 criteria. The current guidelines by WHO read 1997; it is not clear if other data than tooth presence were collected, use of dental probes for example would not be relevant for counting the number of teeth present.

The Discussion section is somewhat weak and with little focus on the implications of the study as regards development of the guidelines emphasized in the Introduction section.

What next?: Reject because scientifically unsound

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests