Reviewer’s report

Title: Oral Health-related Cultural Beliefs for four racial/Ethnic Groups: Assessment of the Literature

Version: 2 Date: 8 November 2007

Reviewer: Clemencia Vargas

Reviewer’s report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The background section needs some revision:

1. Authors need to acknowledge the strong impact of economic status on oral health and that it is intertwined with culture; this is needed at the start of the paper since the effect of economic status is repeatedly used to explain cultural differences throughout the paper.

2. Also, the background needs to address acculturation; as it is, the background dismisses acculturation (see last statement on page 5 end of second paragraph); but then in the results, acculturation is presented as an explanation for differences in oral health.

3. Page 9, 2nd paragraph: references are needed.

Methods:

4. The selection of populations addressed by the articles is not consistent; all studies should refer to US residents self-identified as belonging to one of the 4 selected groups or to the 4 groups in their native countries.

5. The authors used five cultural domains for this analysis; however, these domains are not clearly presented in the results/discussion sections.

6. For consistency, the first domain should be related to oral health.

7. The results do not reflect that the broad first domain (conceptual models or ideas about health and disease) was fully searched. For Latinos see relevant citations in Molina and Aguirre-Molina, Latino Health in the US.

8. It is not clear from which population the results regarding Traditional Chinese Medicine come from. Following the protocol used for African Americans and Latino populations, the relevant information for this paper would be from Chinese persons residing in the US or the UK rather than from those residing in China.
9. The section in Traditional Chinese Medicine needs to be shortened and should address only the points relevant to this study.

10. The second paragraph on page 25 is off topic.

11. Implications for future public health programs could be enriched by discussing the role of community based participation research (CBPR) as a step in the right direction to provide culturally relevant health services.

12 In the conclusions: The 3rd and 4th bullets are not conclusions derived from the data analyzed in this study.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. Page 8. Describe the tasks rather than specifying which author performed them.

2. Page 10: last paragraph, first sentence should be presented in a more positive tone. The fact that African-Americans hold the same ideas as Anglo-Europeans does not mean that they do not have a “well-articulated set of common beliefs.”

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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'