Reviewer's report

Title: Oral health status of 12-year-old school children in Khartoum state, the Sudan; a school-based survey

Version: 1 Date: 18 February 2009

Reviewer: Peter Cleaton Jones

Reviewer's report:

Reviewer report: Oral health status of 12-year-old school children in Khartoum state, the Sudan; a school-based survey.

This is a well-written manuscript of an oral health survey in the Sudan. It is good to see a report from a neglected area of Africa concerning oral health epidemiological data. The statistical analysis is appropriate and sound.

The paper deserves publication subject to attending to the following:

- The reference to using 1997 WHO diagnostic criteria is incorrect. That edition requires a plane mirror with possible use of a CPI probe. A dental explorer is not recommended - that was last done in the 1987 guidelines. Minor essential

- What is the water fluoride content of the study area and are there any dental preventive programmes in the study schools? Minor essential

- In this reviewer’s opinion figures 1 and 2 would not be missed if they were omitted. Minor essential

- Ethics approval was obtained, what was the consent process regarding parents and children for participation in the study?

- The caries prevalence is low with a skewed distribution but fortunately the sample size is adequate to allow analysis of data from a good number of children. It would be clearer if numbers in groups were shown in Table 2 that deals with children with DMFT >0. Minor essential

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests