Reviewer's report

**Title:** Poverty, Social Exclusion and Dental Caries of 12-year-old children: A cross-sectional study in Lima, Peru

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**Reviewer:** lilani ekanayake

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Poverty, social exclusion and dental caries of 12 year old children; A cross sectional study in Lima, Peru

This is an interesting piece of research which gives an insight to the effects of poverty and social exclusion on dental caries. Though the effect of poverty and social exclusion on health has been extensively researched, information related to their effects on oral health is very limited. Thus it is worthy of publication subject to address of the following issues:

1. Indicate the response rate in the results section rather than in the methodology.

2. Indicator used to measure social exclusion- According to the three references given it is evident that this indicator has been used to assess social exclusion in the European region. Was it tested for validity and reliability for use in Peru? This aspect has to be mentioned in the methodology.

3. How many clusters were selected? How were the children selected from each cluster? Information is needed with regards to these.

4. It is mentioned that intra- and inter-examiner reliability values for dental caries assessment were 0.93 and 0.85 respectively.

But only one examiner has recorded dental caries in the children and hence it should be only intra examiner variability measurement. Is the value given for inter-examiner variability related to the calibration exercise? This needs to be clarified?

5. Results:

Paragraph 1 line 4: rather than stating 83.3% had dental caries experience. Indicate that the prevalence of caries was 83.3%.

6. Discussion: Page 6 Paragraph 2 lines7-9:

“However poverty and social exclusion were not related in this sample, which fail to fulfill all the four conditions required to support a mediated pathway”. This sentence is not clear. What are the four conditions?