Reviewer's report

Title: Toothache and associated factors in Brazilian adults: a cross-sectional population-based study.

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Reviewer: Jimmy Steele

Reviewer's report:

This paper reviews the prevalence of toothache in a Brazilian community. The basics of sampling and analysis are sound and I have no major issues with them. The text would benefit from some final editing and review by a native English speaker, because, whilst the English much better than my Portuguese, there are a few slightly unusual phrass and constructions which could easily be improved.

Trying to calculate a prevalence for any given condition can be quite tricky. In this case there are two major issu which I think need to be raised in the discussion:

1. To what extent are the authors comfortable that the pain reported by their subjects was actually toothache, and what do they mean by toothache anyway? Prevalence data like this are easily skewed by other forms of pain from around the mouth, including TMD (which is often initially interpreted as dental pain) and perhaps other sources. This is touched upon in the text but it would be good to know how this could be improved in the future.

2. What effect did a six month reference period has on prevalence. The prevalence has been calculated over a six month period but there are all sorts of issues about recall and accuracy that again make accurate assesment of prevalence difficult. Toothache in its classical forms (pulpitis, apical periodontitis) are characterised by short lived and rather severe pain. The authors need to justify more clearly why a six month reference was used and whether a shorter recall interval might have had advantages. Future researchers in this area need to be prompted as to how they may answer this question more precisely.

The text is already quite long and some of the discussion may need to be shortened in order to accommodate this material.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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 that I have no competing interests