Reviewer's report

Title: Recruitment and informed consent of research participants in the extremely high density multicultural population of Doha, Qatar in the Arabian Gulf Region

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Reviewer: Maged El-Setouhy

Reviewer's report:

Reviewer report for manuscript titled
"Recruitment and informed consent of research participants in the extremely high density multicultural population of Doha, Qatar in the Arabian Gulf Region"

Prepared by: Maged El-Setouhy MD

First I like to express my appreciation to the authors trying to highlight and evaluate the problem of informed consent and recruitment in the gulf area where minimal publication are there.

Reviewing the manuscript points:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
The study question is well defined by the authors

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The methods are confusing.

Recruitment and informed consent:

• Major Compulsory Revisions: Not clear on what bases the authors decided to interview 20 from each language, with no calculation for the sample size, although they mentioned that Qatar around 100 culture live in Qatar which would carry a wide range of differences. Mentioning that maximum variation sampling need to more explained and how variations were defined to use 20 for each group. If this could not be explained, it is better to mention that it is a convenient sample from the 4 main languages 20 of each as this would better describe the exact situation of the study.

• Major Compulsory Revisions: It is mentioned in page 10: that the authors approached 153 then the legible were 90 then 6 were dropped eligibility exclusion and patient declines. What I understood that they approached 153 then dropped those who refused and/or not legible to be included. I got confused what is the difference between those excluded earlier and those last 6 excluded later.

• Minor Essential Revisions: The refusal rate among Arabic speakers is a real cultural question mark as indicated in table 1 with male to female ratio 1:3 that had to be discussed more.

Study sitting:
• Discretionary Revisions: having the interview done in the waiting room with the presence of others waiting in the same room is usually a difficult sitting to get the answers for the in depth interview. Private place would reduce the vulnerability that was the main finding.

• Minor Essential Revisions: Nothing mentioned about the number of the Qatari subjects who accepted to participate in the study. This may show how they think about being subjects of research and this also will show if they feel vulnerable like others or not.

• Discretionary Revisions: Regarding compensation in open places I think it would be shameful as well specially for some cultures and specially if offered from woman to man in some cultures as well. Nothing mentioned if there is any deference between offering the compensation in privacy than in open areas. If this data is there it might be helpful

• Discretionary Revisions: In the last paragraph of the data transformation section page 9. It is mentioned that some data is based on the observation of the RAs which would be a real source of bias.

3. Are the data sound?
Although the sample size is convenient and data could not be generalized still the data is carrying new knowledge which is sound.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Major Compulsory Revisions:
  • The manuscript does not really adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.
  • The result section is the most confusing section:
  o it includes in some parts e.g. page 13 the first paragraph is mainly methodology.
  o In the same page 13 the second paragraph(having all the RAs females) and last paragraph (using crowded waiting rooms) are mainly limitation rather than results

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Discussion section is a nice section although the authors sometimes jump to conclusions that is not really measured well e.g.
  • Major Compulsory Revisions: Page 21 first paragraph: the authors concluded that the interviews successfully occurred in public place without comparing the outcome of interviews occurred in public places versus in private places
  • Major Compulsory Revisions: The main finding was the vulnerability as mentioned by the authors. However vulnerability is a very general term that need
to be carefully used. I am not sure also to what extent the subjects are vulnerable
in Qatar and if they are vulnerable because they are expatriate and if this would
convey the message that just by being expatriate in Qatar you are vulnerable and
need more protection?? If this is true this is only in research or generally and to
what extent?

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Major Compulsory Revisions:
• The limitation section include the inability to generalize the data because of the
  sample size which is true as it is mostly convenient sample
• However, Many limitations are included in the result section and as I mentioned
  earlier.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building,
both published and unpublished?
Minor Essential Revisions:
Yes, but some of the authors names are written wrong e.g. reference #21

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable?
Major Compulsory Revisions:
The language is good but the writing is confusing specially the results section as
mentioned above.

In conclusion
• The article should be published as it includes important data not published before.
• Although my mother tongue is not English but the English of this article is
  simple and understandable which easily readable and cited.
• The English of the
• I reviewed the statistics and commented on the sample size and technique from
  the statistics point of view
• I am Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have
  responded to the major compulsory revisions. However, I trust that the authors
  will do and I hope to see this paper published.

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 that I have no competing interests