Author's response to reviews

Title: Access to and utilisation of GP services among Burmese migrants in London: a cross-sectional descriptive study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer's report

Title: Access to and utilisation of GP services among Burmese migrants in London: a cross-sectional descriptive study

Version: 2

Date: 14 June 2010

Reviewer: Ilse Blignault

Reviewer's report:
Overall this manuscript is better than the one originally submitted, however I believe that there is still further room for improvement. I have made some suggestions, most of which I would classify as minor essential revisions, below.

p.2, first line of Abstract Results: Suggest rewording as “The respondents were young, of roughly equal gender (51% female) and well educated, and had a fair level of knowledge ...”

Revised as advised.

p.4, Background: Text beginning “By September 2008 ...” would be better placed at the end of this section (before Materials and methods). Suggest leaving off the last sentence which gives estimated number of Burmese migrants in London as being approximately 10,000 as it is result and, therefore, inappropriate here.

Revised as advised.

p.6, Study population and sample size: Suggest rewording as “Although official figures cited earlier were much lower [refs], based on our in-depth interviews with Burmese key informants we estimated ...”

Revised as advised.

p.6, Last two sentences of same paragraph: Suggest rewording as “The selection criteria for the survey required that respondents were Burmese migrants aged 15-60 years and residing in Greater London. An upper age limit was used in view of the higher utilization of health services among older people. For the in-depth interviews, we recruited Burmese migrants from different socio-economic clusters who had lived in London for more than 5 years and in at least 3 different areas of London, to ensure that they had broad knowledge about Burmese communities in London.

Revised as advised.

p.7, Data collection: How were the volunteers recruited?

We have added this information in the section on data collection, but it is also already mentioned in the section on Study design.
p.8, line 4: Should be “rights”. Do you need both England and (London)?

We changed this to “entitlements to and costs of health care in England”.

p.9, para 2, Knowledge: Suggest rewording as “Around 50% of respondents had correct knowledge on GP registration entitlement of asylum seekers, overstayers and students with 1 year visa. Only 21% [give correct figure] gave the correct answer to a question regarding GP registration entitlement of migrants holding a 6-month student visa (Figure 2).”

Revised as advised.

p.9, para 3: Delete “However” at beginning of sentence.

Revised as advised.

p.12, para 2. Should be “follows”. I found the quotation confusing. It is not clear what medicines were bought (i.e. purchased) in the UK or brought (i.e. carried) from Burma. Is the informant saying that he has treated himself for TB and malaria?

We changed to “follows” and rephrased the quotation to make it clearer where the medicines were purchased and whether the respondent has treated himself (which he doesn’t elaborate on in this quotation).

p. 16, para 3: Suggestions for provision of information materials and telephone hotlines on health and immigration seem rather limited. A community-development approach might also be useful. You could cite the recent briefing paper on Health and access to health care of migrants in the UK from the Race Equality Foundation available online at: http://www.better-health.org.uk/files/health/health-brief19.zip

Revised as advised.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.
Reviewer’s report

Title: Access to and utilisation of GP services among Burmese migrants in London: a cross-sectional descriptive study

Version: 2

Date: 11 June 2010

Reviewer: Edwin Amalraj Edwin Raja

Reviewer’s report:

The revised manuscript on ‘Access to primary health care among Burmese migrants in London: a cross-sectional descriptive study’ by Nyein Chan Aung et al reads well.

However, I have a few points (Discretionary Revisions) that need to be taken into account before considering for publication:

1. The author may consider acknowledging the following work by including this as a reference “Adhikary P, et al., Health and lifestyle of Nepalese migrants in the UK published in BMC Int Health Hum Rights. 2008 May 23;8:6 ”

   We have added this reference as appropriate in the discussion section (with regard to education level, age and duration of stay in the UK).

2. The author may consider moving statement related to methodology from results (2nd part of last sentence in 1st paragraph of results)

   This sentence refers to the English language knowledge of respondents - we believe it is better placed in the results section.

3. Number at the start of the sentence should be written out in words.

   We found one such case and have amended it.

4. You may consider proving a 95% CI for GP registration rate

   Revised as advised (page 10).

5. ORs and their 95% CIs should be presented with two decimal places consistently (both in text and in tables)

   Changed as advised.

6. The author has stated ‘marginally significantly associated’ in fact where 95% CI does not include the value of 1.
The 95% CI includes 1 as detailed on page 9: (OR=0.43, 95% CI= 0.18-1.01). We have rephrased this sentence to make it easier to understand.

In the section on GP registration, the author listed the significant factors. The next sentence starts with ‘On the other hand’, age was included in the list. Please rethink of mixing age and education in one sentence.

We have revised this in this section, as well as the associated table, by including age and education as suggested.

7. The results in the GP registration are not clear. You may revise it.

We have comprehensively rewritten this sub-section of the results and hope it is now much clearer.

8. Instead of finding correlation co-efficient between a continuous variable (age, etc.,) and nominal variable (GP registration), the author may present summary measures (mean or median and their respective associated variability depending on the distribution) and compare.

The correlation co-efficient currently given in the manuscript provide a fair account and a quick overview of the association with the GP registration status. We feel that a further extension of the analysis and presentation of these data will make the paragraph unnecessarily lengthy.

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.