Reviewer’s report

Title: Access to primary health care among Burmese migrants in London: a cross-sectional descriptive study

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Reviewer: Fu Keung Daniel Wong

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Comments on the manuscript “Access to primary health care among Burmese migrants in London: a cross-sectional descriptive study”

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?

‘Access to primary health care’ was operationally defined in the study as ‘Access to GP services’. This operational definition is subjected to debate because ‘GP services’ is only one aspect of primary health. Moreover, it would seem more preferable to include ‘a utilization’ dimension in the definition of access because I imagine the underlying reason for doing this study was to try to understand how much and how well Burmese migrants have been using primary health care. Indeed, as the authors mentioned, while the GP registration was high, the actual utilization was much lower.

I am not sure why ‘knowledge on health care’ was included, as it was not adequately discussed in the Background section. Indeed, there is need to provide more information about Burmese migrants and about the health care system in the UK.

One other point is that, student migrants are usually separately researched from refugee or ordinary migrants. However, this study appears to have lumped all of these categories together. Why? This might have introduced biases in the sample and might have made the interpretations difficult.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

The sampling method was one of snowball, and convenience sampling. Given the difficulty in recruiting migrants (i.e. common difficulty found in migrant studies), I believe the authors had done a pretty good job in recruiting subjects. Having said this, the sample could still be biased, with a younger, and student migrants in the sample. Can the authors provide information about Burmese population in London or Europe and make an attempt to compare their similarities and differences.

It was a good attempt to use qualitative data to triangulate the quantitative findings. However, very little was mentioned about the qualitative part of the study that was conducted. Besides giving the readers the number of participants, can the authors tell us more about the questions asked (i.e. interview schedule),
the ways the data was analysed, and to use the data more systematically in the results and discussion.

Can the authors put in a paragraph about the objectives of the study?

3. Are the data sound?

The statistical methods used were appropriate. However, as mentioned, the sampling method might have resulted in certain biases in the data. Therefore, the authors need to discuss the data in a more confined manner so that it would be more reflective of the sample characteristics of the study.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

I have no further question about the quantitative aspect of the reporting, but have raised my concerns about the qualitative aspect of the reporting.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

The study did raise some interesting issues such as the reason why there were delays in seeing GP: cultural preference for self-medication. The authors mentioned that socio-demographic factors had stronger effect on GP registrations. Why? Can the authors discuss each of these factors and provide explanations as to how they might have influenced GP registration in the UK?

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?

Yes.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

Not applicable.

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

I would suggest the authors to rewrite the title to “access to GP services” rather than “to primary care”.

9. Is the writing acceptable?

Yes.

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached) are required.

**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