Reviewer’s report

Title: Can low care of PWE be explained by insufficient knowledge of health staff? Example of Laos

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Reviewer: Elisa Bruno

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Epilepsy treatment gap is a major public health issue in lower-income countries where it is estimated over 75%. It is attributed to different factors mainly linked to the health care level and to socio-cultural context. The lack of skilled health care personnel is considered one of the main factors that contribute to the treatment gap. Moreover proper knowledge of health staff is difficult to assess.

The authors analysed the knowledge of epilepsy among health staff in Lao PDR, underlining an insufficient knowledge and adding important information for the management of epilepsy in countries with limited resources.

The topic is source of interest, however, there are some issues concerning the present form of the manuscript.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The objective of the paper is nor clearly stated.
2. Considering that the analysis was performed according to the type of health facilities, it would be very important to explain the main differences between them to better interpret the results. Are HC rural facilities? Are HC closer or more accessible to the population? Why DH and HC were pooled together in the analysis?
3. Methods section:
   - The number of PWE consulting health facilities was based on the records of the last two months. As PWE usually underwent 2-3 visits/year, it would be more interesting to know the number of PWE attended during one year.
   - Why is the definition of epilepsy reported? How was it used in the survey?
   - In the section “data management and analysis” is stated that PH and reference hospital were pooled together” but there are no reference hospitals included in the study.
4. Results section:
   - How many subjects of the health staff refused to participate?
   - “The social acceptance was over 55% and up to 83%” How was measured “social acceptance”?
   - “Physician of major hospitals (PH and RH) had the highest social acceptance”. Are “reference hospital” part of the sample?
- Please explain the sentence pag. 10 “A progressive gradient of knowledge of the disease was observed among nurses according to the type of health facilities”. Where are these results reported?

- Pag. 10 “10 health facilities received one or more PWE”. Where these PH, DH or HC? Maybe the poor access of PWE to health care is also linked to the distance between the population and health facilities.

- Please explain the sentence pag. 10 “No PWE called any of the 30 HC”.

5. Discussion section

- “This nationwide survey documented the knowledge of medical and allied health staff on epilepsy as a possible clue for the poor access of PWE to AEDs and health facilities in the Lao PDR” This sentence should be “This nationwide survey documented a lack of knowledge of health care personnel on epilepsy and a poor access of PWE to AEDs and health facilities in the Lao PDR”.

- “Differences in levels of knowledge between nurses and physicians were infrequent and only found in the major hospitals”. These data are not shown among results.

6. Abstract line 43-44 “A better knowledge of the disease is associated with the attendance of PWE at health facilities”. How can you assert this?

7. English should be revised and some sentence should be rephrased

Minor Essential Revisions
- PWE is the acronym for People With Epilepsy and not for People living with epilepsy (table 1)
- Table 2 is after table 3
- The abbreviations should be checked (they are not always used).

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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests