Reviewer's report

Title: Sampling challenges in a study examining refugee resettlement

Version: 2 Date: 27 October 2010

Reviewer: Ignacio Correa-Velez

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This is an interesting paper that reflects on the methodological challenges of doing research in refugee health. Overall, the aim of the paper is well defined and the methods well described.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS:

The Discussion section only refers to articles shown in Table 1. The discussion lacks a description of the findings/methodological challenges in relation to previous published literature.

Relevant papers on the topic are not discussed in the article:
- Ellies et al (2007). Ethical research in refugee communities… Transcultural Psychiatry
- Bloch (2007) Comparative survey research, J Ref Studies

The paper fails to mention alternative non-probabilistic sampling strategies such as quota sampling, and network sampling (ethnosurvey)

It is important to clarify in the discussion section that the sampling method used (link sampling with multiple entry points) does not aim to obtain a true “representative” sample of the target population (as only random methods can do), but a broader sample of the population in terms of specific characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, etc

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS:

Background section:
First paragraph refers to refugees under the UNHCR protection stating that “many will eventually be resettled in new host nations” – this is inaccurate as only 1% of the world refugees are actually resettled in third countries (resettlement has been described as the “1% durable solution”). Unfortunately, the majority of refugees remain for long periods of time in refugee camps in neighbouring
(developing) countries.

Instruments section:
When stating that the instruments used with comparable cultural groups have shown to be valid and reliable, references should be added (pp 5-6).

Language considerations and interview process:
How often were interpreters/cross-cultural workers required?
How many questionnaires were administered to participants and how many were self-completed by participants? Using different data collection methods among participants can influence data quality and comparability

Participants:
The ‘time of arrival’ for selecting participants is quite wide (20 years) – as time of arrival influences health and wellbeing outcomes, a brief explanation of the reasons for using this selection criterion and the likely implications on results should be included in the paper

Results:
First paragraph, 3rd line: …at least six discrete snowball initiation points were used with EACH OF the other three groups
What was the response rate for each of the groups?
Second paragraph, 5th line: …determined by number of years OF schooling…

References 11 and 15 are two versions of the same paper

Table 1:
Include sample size for Ahmad and Taloyan studies
Ghazinour study: move “50 people in outpatient clinic & 50 volunteers” to the study participants column
Gilgen study: OPD/GP full term should be explained as a table footnote

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS:
The section “statistical analysis” would be better located at the end of the methods section.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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