Reviewer's report

Title: Relationship between psychological health and quality of life of people affected by leprosy in the community in Guangdong province, China: a cross-sectional study

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Reviewer: Bipin Adhikari

Reviewer's report:

Xiong and authors have conducted a large survey amongst leprosy affected persons in Guangdong province in China. I congratulate authors for accomplishing a large survey to assess the quality of life and mental health amongst PALs who are often forgotten as the new cases of leprosy are decreasing globally. While the study has been done rigorously and has been written generally well, I see authors struggling to consolidate their findings and streamline their conclusion. The manuscript also needs editing by a native English speaker. I have some specific suggestions to improve their manuscript below.

Abstract

Conclusion: Your study found a high correlation between poor quality of life and poor psychological health. My suggestion would be to focus on how to improve their quality of life more than detecting the cases of leprosy, which is decreasing over the years. You want to focus on these PALs.

You may want to frame like this:

In addition to focusing on the factors associated with poor quality of life and mental health amongst PALs, there is an urgent need of stigma reduction strategies, rehabilitation programs and social integration. This may be achieved by engaging with the member of the communities together with the leprosy affected persons to design a locally tailored interventions programs.

Introduction

Line 7 to 16: This may lead to…. Eyesight. Please break this sentence into shorter ones.

Line 16 to 18: replace as: While these clinical symptoms and consequent disabilities due to leprosy can persist life long, the stigma attached to this disease outweigh the suffering among leprosy affected persons.

Line 20 to 24: Generally, ....................leprosaria

What do you mean by this sentence? Are you trying to say people who live in their hometown are different to who used to live in leprosaria? If so, better to explain what makes them different?

Line 24 to 28: Despite…..this sentence needs paraphrasing. It should not mean that government has ignored the LAP. Rather if I am right, you were trying to say something like this?

As the burden of new cases of leprosy is decreasing, there is decrease in hospital attendance. This might have led to decrease in government's priority to this disease. Nevertheless, the people affected with leprosy who continue to live with some form of disability even after completing the treatment tend to be stigmatized by community members (PMID: 24908528, 26047512).
There is no such external discrimination and internal and self. There are three types of stigma amongst PAL, they are: discrimination, perceived stigma and internalized stigma. Paraphrase the sentence with the literatures below:


First of all clarify what kind of aid are you talking about? Are you trying to say stigma reduction strategies to target these LAP is challenging for several reasons, firstly, as these people tend to scatter around the communities, it is difficult to identify them. Secondly, as has been previously established (PMID: 24901307, 15755198), leprosy affected persons tend to conceal their conditions to prevent themselves from being identified and stigmatized.

People affected with leprosy are vulnerable to ..... How does rigorous environment affect psychological status?

Your rationale could be something like this: At the context of decreasing burden of leprosy globally and in China, it is hard to draw conclusion about the quality of life of leprosy affected persons living in a community. Until so far, there has not been any research of this size in mainland China to explore the quality of life of leprosy affected persons who have completed the treatment. The main objective of this study was to.....# Line 21 to 46: The warm....this system. Move this to method section under the heading research context Line 46 to 50: merge/blend this to objective at the last sentence illustrated above#.

Methods
Research context

Study design

Study site and participants

Line 4: The detected....How did you detect them? Explain. I would say something like this:
People affected with leprosy were identified from the registry based at..........

Line 3: What do you mean a cutoff of 3 points ….in this "environment"? Are you trying to say: The GHQ12 has been previously validated and reliable instrument to measure……..and has been tested in China (cite if there are any studies who have used this scale).

Line 21: Praraphrase: Since WHOQOL can only briefly explore the psychological aspects of people affected with leprosy, GHQ12 was utilized to evaluate the psychological status of the participants.

In discussion and conclusion: as this study's participants are leprosy affected persons living in a community who have already completed the treatment; my suggestions would be to frame/focus the discussion and conclusion more towards how we can improve their quality of life and mental health.

1. Integrate them into the community without discrimination, for example principles inherent in community engagement can be applied (PMID: 28914184). This means, selecting both non affected and affected community members to increase their social participation by for example designing locally suitable stigma reduction strategies for the community. There is a forthcoming article, where there is an extensive discussion on how community engagement can be applied to minimize the stigma in a community.

2. Although new cases of leprosy are decreasing, to avoid further progression of poor quality of life and mental health amongst these people affected by leprosy, a syndromic approach to identify and minimize the progression of psychosocial disorders are urgently needed.

3. People living with deformities and disabilities need active surveillance and treatment for their wounds, rehabilitation programs for their support and occupational measures for them to contribute meaningfully into a society will be helpful.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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