Reviewer’s report
Title: Acute and mixed alcohol intoxications in asylum seekers presenting to an urban emergency department in Switzerland

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Reviewer: Sean O'Connor

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BMC Public Health PUBH-D-18-03704.

Adam Brown et al.: Acute and mixed alcohol intoxications in asylum seekers presenting to an urban emergency department in Switzerland

Brown et al. present a retrospective analysis of 3 year's of alcohol-related admissions comparing features that distinguish asylum-seekers to local Swiss nationals in a large, urban, upscale emergency room department.

The presentation is interesting, informative and generally well written. The issue is relevant to our times and the methods employed are straight forward, albeit based on fairly soft criteria for alcohol intoxication. Limitations of the study are appropriately discussed.

A few minor inconsistencies might be considered by the authors:

Some of the data presented in the Tables are a bit confusing: In Table 1, the totals in years of consultation and sex do not reflect the sum of the columns to the left. In Table 2, under the row heading 'Psychiatrist Needed', 26% of asylum seekers is listed, vs. 49% of the local [Swiss] population, but in the text (e.g. page 6, line 33 and elsewhere) the assertion is that asylum seekers were more likely to be referred to a psychiatrist. In Table 2, the median age of the 2 groups is quite close, yet the 'p value' is < 0.001 (not likely) and in Table 1 the median ages are different. I understand that Table 1 describes overall consultations and Table 2 only those with AAMI, but the point of the paper is about AAMI and the reader may infer, incorrectly, that there is an important age difference in the latter.

The abstract states that ' the residency status of all consultations was established', but Figure 1 says 356 were excluded.

The foregoing concerns are stylistic at worst. As for content; It would have been interesting to know the same statistics for the 34,867 non-Swiss, non-asylum seeker admissions excluded from the study; the sample is certainly large enough to permit analysis. Such an inquiry might address the latent concern for cultural bias by the providers.
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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.
Yes

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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