Reviewer’s report

Title: Ethnic disparities in children's oral health: findings from a population-based survey of grade 1 and 2 schoolchildren in Alberta, Canada

Version: 0 Date: 02 Oct 2016

Reviewer: Azza El-Housseiny

Reviewer's report:

Racial and ethnic disparities in schoolchildren's oral health: findings from a population based survey of grade 1 and 2 schoolchildren in Alberta, Canada.

This article aimed at examining racial and ethnic disparities on oral health outcomes among 5-8 year schoolchildren in Alberta, Canada. It is an interested topic. However, some shortcomings need to be addressed by the authors.

1. Few language errors need revision.

2. Introduction: it would be useful to define race and ethnicity.

3. The authors used both race and ethnic disparities in the aim and method, while they were looking for the ancestry or origin of the children. There are few racial groups while there are several ethnic groups worldwide. A race may contain many ethnicities (white / Caucasian include ethnic groups in Europe, Middle East, west Asia …etc) and an ethnic group may have more than one race (people in north India are Mongolian and in the south they are Australoid). It will be good to revise the aim

4. Methods:
   a. It would be better if the authors write the sample size and how they calculated it in more details.
   b. It would be useful to give details about sampling and randomization.
   c. Reference 13 in data source is not acceptable.
   d. It would be good to move the response rate to the results section.
   e. It would be useful to mention what is the method used for detection of caries with description to its criteria and methods of clinical examination.
   f. It would be useful to mention who and where the dental hygienists were trained and calibrated including the inter examiner reliability.
g. It would be helpful if the authors give more details about the parent questionnaire. What are the questions for race and ethnicity, did they included both in the same question with the overlapping between race and ethnicity or they presented separate questions; one for race and another for ethnicity.

h. Did the authors set a criteria for each race and given to the parents or depended on their knowledge to decide their race. A good percentage of the participants had education in high school or less. Can the authors depend on their knowledge? The same is true for the ethnicity since as an example Afghani or Indian people may belong to one of many ethnicities available in Afghanistan or India.

i. It would be better to present the finding and relate them to the origin of the child.

j. The authors did not define the white populations they refer to throughout their manuscript.

k. Data analysis; line 42, it would be good to write the name of the test.

5. Results:

a. It would be useful to discuss why they combined Arab and West Asia and on what bases they considered it as one group; they differ in language, race and culture.

b. Regression analysis line 59; it is not clear what do the authors mean by "but this was not the case for Black children". This needs more clarification black compared to white population.

6. Discussion:

In general it is not helpful to restate the number of the tables in the discussion, as the readers can find the findings in the result section

7. Conclusions

a. In general conclusion should be based on the results.

b. It is not helpful to write references in conclusion.

8. References:

Please, check the reference style and follow the guidelines for authors
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

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

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?
If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal