Author’s response to reviews

Title: Dental caries prevention strategies among children and adolescents with immigrant- or low socioeconomic backgrounds- do they work? A systematic review

Authors:

Marit Slåttelid Skeie (marit.skeie@odont.uib.no)

Kristin S Klock (kristin.klock@uib.no)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Editorial Board, BMC Oral Health

We are very pleased about the referees’ work in improving our paper.

We hereby submit the revised manuscript of "Dental caries prevention strategies among children and adolescents with immigrant- or low socioeconomic backgrounds- do they work? A systematic review” for evaluation and possible publication in BMC Oral Health. The language of the manuscript has been reviewed (“Write 2 Publish”, by Paul Riordan).

The following pages attached include the responses to the two referees. The revisions made into the manuscript are marked in red.

Yours sincerely,

Marit Slåttelid Skeie

(on behalf of the authors).
Responses to the reviewers

Reviewer reports:

Lisa Emily Simon (Reviewer 1):

From a methodologic perspective, it is not clear to me why immigrant populations and low-income populations were chosen together. Consider adding a paragraph in the introduction that discusses potential differences between these two populations as well as interactions between them (for example, do these disparities still apply to high-income immigrant populations? If not, why include immigrants? Do low-income immigrant populations face higher oral disease rates than low-income native peers?).

Background, page 3, line 55-61

We have included a new section in the manuscript:

Epidemiological studies from the Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Sweden and Norway) have revealed disparities in caries between children and adolescents with and without foreign backgrounds {Christensen, 2010 #4568; Jacobsson, 2011 #4576; Skeie, 2005 #4254}, and concluded a worse caries status among those with immigrant background, this in accordance with recent findings from USA {Sengupta, 2017 #4580}. Among caries determinants, not only low income, but also socio- cultural conditions that influence their lives, play important roles {Christensen, 2010 #4568}. To strength their identity, it is not unusual that unfavorable types of diet and dietary patterns from country of origin are maintained in its traditional way {Ludwig, 2011 #4579}.

Please also consider including justification of the exclusion of indigenous populations, who often face some of the most severe health disparities in many developed nations.

Response:

The indigenous population was excluded in this review. The reason was the recognition that this population was qualified for an own separate review. Such a review also should be done in close
cooperation with experts in social-cultural anthropology for interpreting the results in a cultural sensitive way.

It would appear that this manuscript was written some years ago as the most recent citation is from 2015 and much of the literature is much older. I would recommend the authors consider adding some more recent to citations to the introduction section to provide additional background on their choice of population focus, the caries burden in this group.

Response:

The final search was done 10 Oct 2015. The work of going through the data and analyze the results has been time consuming, so not until Febr 2017, the manuscript was submitted. In addition the process of evaluating the work from BMC Oral Health has taken more time than normally. Therefore to renew its process of searching for recent citations, we want if possible, to avoid as we know it will take time. A short superficial search did not relieve many citations.

In the discussion, please consider adding a bit more information about some of the interventions described.

Discussion, page 11, line 253-63

Response:

We have followed your advice.

There are some minor grammatical errors in English throughout the manuscript. I would recommend that a native English speaker copy-edit the manuscript prior to publication. (Example abstract line 23 "articles focusing [on] underprivileged group[s]").

Abstract, page 2, line 63

Response:

This has been taken into account and revised in the manuscript.
Some specific comments are below.

Abstract:

2.28 Line about excluding fluoride is awkward, consider rephrasing. This is especially confusing given that you later mention slow-release fluoride and APF.

Response:

We did not exclude fluoride. We have written “water fluoridation and fluoride toothpaste”. This was conscious decision as these two fields of fluoride technologies, have for years presented evidence of effectiveness. We could therefore focus on other preventive interventions that have not been sufficiently scrutinized for their impact.

Background:

3.45 Dental caries is a communicable disease with modifiable risk factors; I believe the term "lifestyle disease" is potentially stigmatizing. Please consider rephrasing.

Response:

This has been taken into account and revised in the manuscript.

3.47 Please use "low-income" rather than "poor."

Response:

This has been taken into account and revised in the manuscript.
3.55-3.60 While I applaud the acknowledgement of the complex social factors that contribute to caries development, the phrasing used here may imply that individuals are at fault for their caries status (for example, the mention of "priorities").

Background, page 3, line 67
Response:
We no longer mention “priorities”.

The remainder of the introduction is excellent.

Methods:
Please note in your method how many articles were initially identified by your search criteria.

MM, page 5, line 106
Response:
This has been done and included in the MM section.

Please note how many articles were determined to be relevant by only 1 author (% agreement).

MM, page 7, line 142
Response:
“As both authors agreed on the selection, a consensus was not necessary”. This sentence is included in the manuscript.

6.132-134 These two sentences are redundant.
Response:

We have revised this section a bit, and excluded the sentences found redundant.

6.145 Consider adding a citation that would allow a reader to understand the limitations of the USPSTF rubric when used alone.

Discussion, page 10, line 218-221
Response:

We refer to a paper claiming that a well-designed cohort study might be more compelling than an inadequately powered or poorly conducted randomized controlled trial.

Discussion:

9.195 Consider providing some background to your reference of Khan et al as your "gold standard" for systematic review.

Disvcussion, page 9, line 198
Response:

Because this reference describes what the adjective systematic means. We have included a sentence in the manuscript.

10.222 "proximal" lesions, not "approximal."

Discussion, page 10, line 233
Response:
This has been taken into account.

Gerardo Maupomé (Reviewer 2):

Weaknesses:

Their omission of the gray literature is unexplained. Please add a sentence to indicate the rationale for doing so.

MM, page 5, line 112-4.

Response:

Grey literature may lack a systematic means of distribution and collection, and the standard of quality, review and production can vary considerably. Therefore it would have been difficult to discover, access, and evaluate.

A sentence is included in the manuscript.

A few aspects of language could be improved; of note are the incorrect use of 'which' for 'that' in various sentences. 'focussed' has one s.

Response:

We have taken these remarks into account. “Write 2 Publish” by Paul Riordan has gone through the manuscript.

The Acknowledgment section has convoluted syntax.
Response:
We have deleted previous sentence.

The statement of the systematic review at the end of the Introduction was inadvertently truncated. It is found in other sections, but must be clearly stated here.

Background, page 4-5, line 91-2.
Response:
We have included a sentence to help for this.

Although it is a matter of semantics, the statement "Caries is a totally preventable disease" looks a bit adventurous to this reviewer. Some qualification is in order, as in 'largely preventable'...

Background, page 4, line 89
Response:
This has been taken into account.

If improvements to the English language within your manuscript have been requested, you should have your manuscript reviewed by someone who is fluent in English.

Response:
“Write 2 Publish” by Paul Riordan has gone through the manuscript.