Reviewer's report

Title: Caries Prevalence and Dental Health of 8-12 Year-Old Children in Damascus City in Syria during the Syrian Crisis; a Cross-Sectional Epidemiological Oral Health Survey

Version: 0 Date: 29 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Jose Leopoldo Ferreira Antunes

Reviewer's report:

This study reported the prevalence of dental caries among children in Damascus, during a period of severe crisis. The theme is of foremost importance for dental public health; documenting the oral health status is a first necessary step to the planning of dental care. I offer some suggestions with the intention of contributing to the study.

1. Authors informed how they calculated the necessary sample size. I suggest that they also explain how they selected the children to participate in the study. Had the gathering of children used a previous sorting of schools in each sector of the city?

2. How many dentists participated in the survey? Some information about the training and calibration of dental examiners, including kappa statistics, would be welcome.

3. Where were the children examined, at their own homes or schools?

4. Age is a critical definition in dental surveys. The WHO suggests selecting 12-year-old children as a guideline to assess the prevalence of dental caries. Having included children aged from 8 to 12 years old children demands some additional justification.

5. More contextual information would be desirable. The reader was informed that the city had their population inflated by a migratory influx of people fleeing from the war. Has this process affected the different city's sectors heterogeneously? Has the war affected the city in another way? Do the city's sectors differ among themselves in any other way, such as socioeconomic status and access to health services?

6. Some words on the access to fluoride would also be welcome. Is tap water fluoridated in Damascus? Does the water pipeline system serve the city homogeneously?
7. Table 1 does not report original information. I missed some explanation on why to review the literature about this topic, and which was the criteria for selecting the studies.

**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.

No

**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:

Acceptable
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