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: 05 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Peter Bottenberg

Reviewer's report:

OHEA-D-18-00438 review

The study deals with a cross-sectional survey of Damascus children performed in 2016. It is praiseworthy that in a country suffering from war and famine still courageous persons are committed to scientific research. However, I deplore that not more information was extracted or communicated from the available data and that reporting failed to conform to present-day standards.

Materials:

Sampling procedure: which were the clusters of the sampling procedure?

At what level caries was recorded? Enamel, dentinal? Cavitation level?

What was the intra-examiner-reliability for the recording? Were the data recorded on paper or digitally? If on paper what was the possible transferal error?

You recorded DMF-s/dmf-s: which surface on what tooth was more affected (expand information given on page 8) ? Did this differ according to sectors (as DMF t and s seem to be quite different per sector)?

Was caries the only oral health problem recorded or did the authors look for other health indicators like plaque and gingivitis? Did you find signs of untreated systemic diseases or malnutrition?

The different sectors of Damascus could have been shown on a map (as supplementary material) and more details be supplied for characteristics of these sectors (SES, autochthonous vs fugitive population).
The authors state that 'personal information' was gathered. Which data material was this? Did you record nutritional and oral hygiene habits?

Statistics: are you sure that data were normally distributed or is median a better estimation of the situation?

Discussion:

The table with all the epidemiological information does not really contribute to the essence of the research. More in-depth information regarding YOUR population would be more welcome. Limit comparison to relevant populations in the discussion (comparable lifestyle and environment or reference populations). Discuss nutritional habits leading to increased caries risk, apparently access to refined sugars was possible in the given circumstances. Discuss whether (if data are available) situation has changed with regards to pre-war situation.

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.

No

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
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