Reviewer’s report

Title: Treatment decisions regarding caries and dental developmental defects in children – a questionnaire-based study among Norwegian dentists

Version: 0 Date: 18 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Ola Al-Batayneh

Reviewer's report:

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Dear editor, dear authors,

I thank you for this well-conducted study, however, would like to suggest a few things to improve its quality:

Abstract:

Aim: should be more informative indicating options in children and adolescents as in title, and use "treatment decisions" rather than "treatment strategies" as in intro part.

Results:

- Please mention a brief description about the profile of the surveyed dentists. And indicate that most of the dentists surveyed worked as general practitioners. This is important as it reflects the rather non-ideal restorative options chosen, that wouldn't otherwise be chosen by a pediatric dentist. A pediatric dentist would rather put a SSC.

- Please indicate the main reasons for their restorative choices.

- Please indicate how the background characteristics did not significantly affect the choices.
Keywords- rather than "Questionnaire study"- please add MIH, also useful to add 'restorative options", "deep caries"....

Introduction:

- Informative, however lengthy. I suggest delete the second paragraph. Try to make it no longer then 1.5-2 pages.

- Would be clearer for the reader if you indicate from the introduction whether in the PDS: are the dentists general dentists or specialists?

- Aim- needs to be re-written to indicate children & adolescents as in title.

Methods:

- Adequate, however, in the questionnaire, "Background characteristics of dentists: what is meant by main occupation? Aren't they dentists?"

- What were the inclusion/exclusion criteria for participants. eg dentists who do not treat children were excluded later.

- Please attach the questionnaire to show how the questions about the cases were addressed. I am concerned about giving ZOE as a restorative option, the reader must know in which context this option was given, or how was the question addressed to the participants.

- In the questionnaire, the section about how often the respondents registered DDDs in their patients, were there types of DDDs suggested or given to them?

- For case 2- please indicate the grading of the molar according to the MIH treatment need index by Stephen et al, 2017 (EAPD); I suggest its a (4c) score.

Results:

- Line 163- "nearly half 257 (44.8%), registered other DDDs frequently"- what are the other types?

Discussion:

- Are general dentists allowed/ do they have access to treating children under GA in Norway? Please discuss this point.
- The discussion is lengthy. I suggest, lines 201-211 to be summarized in a few lines, likewise, lines 212-229 be removed or summarized in a few lines, as they are well-known facts.

- Lines 232-237 should be the first paragraph as an explanation for the response rate, starting from "It can be argued that ....", this should be followed by a brief description of the profile of the dentists surveyed with regards to their age experience...etc and whether there were any significant differences present/not present that could affect the choices.

- Lines 230-232- should be considered a limitation, mentioned just before the conclusion (end of discussion).

Conclusion- There is a mention of "There were no statistically significant associations between background characteristics and reasons for treatment choices." This was not mentioned in results, or discussion, and suddenly it's in the conclusion. Please check this point, and adjust accordingly.

References- well covered.

Tables:

Table 1- Please indicate that there were general dentists (indicate prevalence) and specialists. For age, please indicate the age ranges, it's interesting to see the youngest & oldest to compare experience.

Table 2- Why is esthetics given as a reason for extraction (case 1a), and ZOE (case 1b)?

Figure- as indicated above, for case 2, please mention the MIH-TNI score in the legend (case description).

**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.

Unable to assess

**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:

Acceptable

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