Author’s response to reviews

Title: Dental Care Use by Immigrant Canadians in Ontario: a cross sectional analysis of the 2014 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Dr. Messin,

Thank you for your kind consideration of our paper. We would like to thank the reviewers for their suggestions and comments. Please find enclosed a copy of our revised manuscript titled “Dental Care Use by Immigrant Canadians in Ontario: a cross sectional analysis of the 2014 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)”. Please find below replies to the reviewers’ comments in bold.

Reviewer 1:

1) The presentation of the multivariable analysis is odd. This reviewer recommends this is evaluated by a statistician to verify completeness and clarity of results in Table 2.

   This is the standard way to present adjusted OR’s. Please note that the senior authors are both established researchers who have conducted multivariable analysis extensively. Please also note that this analysis was conducted by an epidemiologist and supervised by another more senior epidemiologist. Moreover, the results were vetted by a statistical analyst employed by Statistics Canada. Therefore, the results have been completely and thoroughly verified by more than one person.

2) The manuscript was likely assembled in its different parts by authors with various levels of English proficiency. The Discussion is parsimonious, on target, and comprehensive on the whole. The Introduction has some odd syntax in various sentences; in some cases, the choice of words is almost correct but not completely. Eg, corollary for consequence, counter parts for counterparts (or peers), publically for publicly, across for throughout, and so on. A detailed review by an editor is warranted.

As per your recommendation, the introduction section and the manuscript on the whole have been
reviewed for grammatical errors and syntax.

3) The authors ought to consider whether an alternative or complementary explanation is that people in that type of occupation (no insurance) are pre-selected from a group with a dental culture in which episodic dental care is the dominant view of dental care. 
Please note that this has been clearly stated and explained in the manuscript previously. Also note that in Canada the most prominent way of financing dental care is via employment based dental insurance and this has been further explained in the discussion, P. 10, line 10-11.

4) P. 11, line 6. The authors ought to consider that a more finely grained disassembly of acculturation levels, health behaviors, and alcohol use may be necessary to explain the association found with alcohol use.
As per your suggestion, we have further elaborated on alcohol consumption and its association with dental care use on P. 11, line 7-14.

5) What is social support mitigation?
Please see the Introduction section P. 3, line 8-11 where the phrase "Social Support Mitigation" has been omitted.

6) Reserves are Aboriginal reservations? This reviewer is unsure this is the appropriate noun to be used.
The appropriate term that is used by Statistics Canada is reserves as such, we have kept this term.

7) Please clarify what the response options were for intervals of time since last seen a dentist; the response options are not mutually exclusive. Ie, 1-2 years, 2-3 years, etc.
The options for the intervals of time since last seen the dentist were mutually inclusive. They have been changed (P.5, line 5-7) to accurately reflect the way they were asked in the questionnaire.

Reviewer 2:

1) Introduction: The authors should provide more information on the countries/regions that migrants originate from.
Information on the countries of origin has been added to the Introduction section P. 1, line 4-7.

2) A sentence or two should be added on how the expected results of the study may contribute to improving the oral health of migrants in Canada.
Please see P. 3, line 12-15.

3) Methods: The authors should explain why the Région du Nunavik and Région des Terres- etc…
This study was based on secondary data analysis and not primary data collection. The authors do not have any control of the eligibility criteria. We postulate however, that this exclusion was made by Statistics Canada based on difficulty in accessibility to these regions.

4) The authors could describe how each of the covariates was measured or - for nominal/ordinal variables – at least how they were categorized.
According to your suggestion, we have added how we have categorized each of the covariates.

5) The authors conducted a weighted analysis. However, general population surveys which include migrants tend to be not representative for this population group making weighted analyses
problematic. The authors should explain why they consider the sampling weights valid in this case or describe possible limitations in the discussion.

Population and sampling weights account for nonresponse bias and for the complex sampling strategy. This is the standard technique recommended by Statistics Canada for its data. However, we agree that the immigrant group can be quite heterogeneous and dynamic which warrants further studies exploring specific needs of different cultural groups which the immigrant population in Canada. This has been added to the Discussion section on P. 12, line 9-13.

6) As migrants are very heterogeneous, the authors should explain why they decided against distinguishing between different groups of migrants

The information you are requesting was not collected and hence was not available in the survey.

7) Results: Tab. 2: Information on the sample size should be provided. In case the weighting has been considered in the logistic regression, this information should be added to the table.

Please see Table 1, where the characteristics of the sample have been described.

8) Discussion: "In fact, a study conducted in Nova Scotia found that 45 recent adult…" Should it be "45%"? Else, this sentence is not very informative.

This has been changed in the Discussion section.

9) The authors could elaborate on how their findings on factors associated with dental care use among migrants - if at all - differ from findings of studies conducted among non-migrants. This information has been added to the Discussion section P. 11, line 20-23 and P.12, line 1-3.

10) Conclusion: The conclusion seems to be incomplete (see page 12).

Conclusion section has been updated (P. 13).