Reviewer's report

Title: Screening for infectious diseases of asylum seekers upon arrival: the necessity of the moral principle of reciprocity

Version: 0 Date: 10 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Verina Wild

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the paper "Screening for infectious diseases of asylum seekers upon arrival: the necessity of the moral principle of reciprocity".

The topic is highly relevant, and the authors are very right in pointing out on page 6, first paragraph, that studies that address the normative principles of screening-programmes for asylum seekers are rare, if not non-existent. The paper is written in a very clear way, and despite the limited word count it manages to include information on the background, the central argument of applying the principle of reciprocity in health screening of asylum seekers, and of going into more detail about potential implementation of the principle. It represents an appropriate balance between the normative background and the practical implementation. In general I endorse publication of the paper, and have some minor comments for revisions:

The authors mention the current "migrant crisis". I find the often heard argument convincing, that we are actually not experiencing a "migrant crisis" but rather a crisis of solidarity, a crisis in relation to armed conflicts, etc. Maybe the authors would like to reflect upon the use of this term, as it might add to the perception that the migrants cause a crisis (and reading the paper I would think that the authors would not want to endorse that view).

P2, line 40: I think the more appropriate term here is: …the number of forcibly displaced people….

Line 45: When did European countries implement screening programmes? Add information on years?

46 / 47: To put screening in place in order to detect individuals "who may pose a threat" sounds as if this was generally agreed upon. In reality only some countries frame it that way. That migrants "pose a threat" is a very specific way of formulating it. Either the authors should refer to the source which frames it that way, or formulate the sentence with a bit more care in order to avoid stigmatisation.
Line 59/60: "go together" - a bit unclear what is meant here. Something like "evoke" maybe?

Line 60/61: How is the sentence on non-medical grounds related to the sentence before that mentions normative justifications? To me normative justifications are ethical / moral reasons and not economic, political and emotional grounds - but the two sentences seem to imply this?

Line 62: This sentence should be changed, if the authors want to make the point that risk for disease outbreak is substantially less than perceived. For example: Incidences of infectious diseases are often misinterpreted by politicians and the press as a threat. However, …

Line 68 / 69: Asylum seekers are part of "the public", so they are included into the "public right" the authors describe here (but connect to the host countries rights only). Maybe reformulate, for example: It is of normative relevance to discuss the proper balance between the state's obligations to secure public health for all and at the same time to protect the individual rights and needs of asylum seekers.

P 3 Line 72: harm principle as the most cited principle - is that so? Many authors refer to "justice" or "health equity" as the decisive value in public health. Maybe frame it as harm principle is "often mentioned / referred to"…/ or delete the lines 72 - 76, until "reciprocity" is mentioned.

Line 90: "Main text" - should there be a more specific headline?

P4 line 139: "the limited access to national health insurance"? (instead of right)

P5 line 161: "facilitating the individual" - what does that mean?

P6 lines 172 - 173 on two levels of shortcomings: Unclear, expand a bit?

Line 175: These British and Swedish programmes can help to reflect…(instead of "exemplify")

Line 179: Subheading "Screening in Europe" should be changed to "The examples of UK and Sweden"
P8: line 251/252: create a tension…And the following lines: This is too brief to understand really well, please expand slightly.

P9, line 275. The authors write that reciprocity emphasizes the importance of certain rights (e.g. autonomy, right to health), but the paper does not spell that out in great detail. The paper is really very short (due to word limit). It would be good to frame the paper / their argument as a first step and to invite further and more thorough exploration.

**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?**
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