Reviewer’s report

Title: Immigrant Health Access in Texas: Policy, Rhetoric, and Fear in the Trump Era

Version: 0 Date: 06 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Ana M Donate

Reviewer's report:

This paper examines the negative effects of the Trump administration, with his anti-immigration rhetoric and practices, on undocumented immigrants' health care access. To gain insights into this question, the authors conducted a study consisting of qualitative focus groups with community health workers operating in different areas within the state of Texas. The analysis consisted of thematic analysis of focus groups' transcripts. The paper is well written and the methods and results are clearly described. The findings are important and contribute to our understanding of barriers to access health care services among a vulnerable population. I only have a few comments to improve this paper, particularly the discussion of the findings. These are listed below by section.

Methods:
* A table or paragraph describing key characteristics of the sample (e.g. gender, age, years of experience, region, etc.) is standard in any study, even if it's a qualitative one.
* It would be great if the authors could add more specifics about the months in which data collection started and ended. With the Trump administration officially beginning in January 2017, views may have changed (worsened) from the beginning to the end of that year and it would be good to know how early in 2017 some of these focus groups were conducted and whether the researchers noted any trends over time in the themes or their frequency/intensity.
* It would be good have as supplement material the focus group guide and a table with the major areas covered by the guide and/or sample questions.

Results:
* It would be good to provide a bit of info about the participant from which each of the quotes comes from (for example, a pseudonym or participant number, gender, years of experience and/or area where CHW is located -McAllen, Houston, etc.). This usually goes between parentheses at the end of each quote.
* I would be curious on whether the researchers notice any notable differences between CHWs operating in large cities, like Houston or Dallas, compared to those working in more rural, less populated areas.
* On the quote at the bottom of Page 9, I wonder if there is typo on the transcription. The meaning of the expression "he was working on getting access to immigration status" is difficult to understand. If the transcription is indeed correct, I would encourage the authors to clarify what this means.
Discussion:

* The findings are not based on direct reports from undocumented immigrants, but on the perceptions of CHWs. The authors properly acknowledge this in the Limitations section. While it is reasonable to expect that these perceptions are a good reflection of the experiences of the populations they serve, it would still be advisable to qualify the general discussion of the findings to stay closer to the actual study and make it clear the study did not directly examine these issues from the perspective of the undocumented immigrant population, but through the lenses of these workers. So, for example, on the second statement in the discussion, instead of writing "fear remains a pervasive problem…", the authors may want to write "CHWs' comments (or narratives) suggest fear remains a pervasive problem…"

* The perspective of CHW certainly can shed important light on the challenges experienced by undocumented immigrants. However, this data will represent the experiences of the share of this population who interacts with CHWs and may fail to capture the barriers and issues of those who do not even get to intersect with these providers of services. In that sense, as dire as these findings are, they may still underestimate the realities faced by those who are even more disenfranchised (e.g. new immigrants who are not yet part of the networks of CHWs, immigrants living in remote areas and/or are more hidden). The limitations should include this point.

* The authors could cite objective data supporting the findings from their own study regarding reduced participation in SNAP among immigrant families during the Trump administration. See for example a recent study by Bovell-Amonn at Boston Medical (https://apha.confex.com/apha/2018/meetingapp.cgi/Paper/416646) and data indicating an overall decrease in SNAP participation in many U.S. states, which could be due to immigrant families opting not to renew or sign up for fear of repercussions.

* The discussion adequately summarizes and interprets the findings, describes the limitations, and points at some implications for future research. What I find missing is something regarding implications for public health interventions, the design of services, etc. How can these findings inform future actions to address or mitigate the concerns and negative impacts identified by this study?

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.

Yes

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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