Reviewer's report

Title: Perceptions about Iranian-Kurds' Ethnic Inequality in Health

Version: 0 Date: 02 May 2017

Reviewer: Ana Gama

Reviewer's report:

This is a very interesting paper focusing on the particularly important topic of ethnic health inequity, in the context of ethnic diversity in Iran and based on the perspectives of Iranian Kurds. This paper provides very interesting insights on perceived health disparities and associated factors related to sociocultural aspects, resources and geographic situation. Nevertheless, in my opinion the manuscript should be strengthen and major revisions should be done before considering it for publication. My comments and suggestions are the following:

Throughout the text authors use the terms "inequity", "inequalities", "disparities" which have different meanings. I suggest to revise the text to ensure consistency of terms.

Background

Line 10: It is prejudice that causes people to have unequal social rights under equal circumstances - Please clarify in what extent prejudice causes unequal social rights, and refer other social factors that may influence such inequality, if there are any.

Line 13: Evidence shows ethnic-racial prejudice to be a very effective variable in the group and individual health associated outcomes. Authors should further explain in what extent/in which way prejudice affects group and individual health associated outcomes.

Line 18: According to various studies, fluctuations associated with health in different ethnic groups have complex associations with other variables. This should be expanded with more information on the other factors associated with health fluctuations across different groups.

Line 22-24: Moreover, inequalities of different ethnic groups differ by various health outcomes; different classes of age, gender, and geographic situations also affect these disparities. I suggest to rephrase the sentence to make it clearer.
Line 35: What people feel regarding ethnic prejudice... The term "feel" is somehow colloquial and it should be avoided. I suggest to replace it by "perceive".

Line 38-40: This is while fewer research focused on ethnicity and health have been conducted from the people's perspective, which may result in finding effective opportunities for intervention and the way ethnicity affects health. This sentence seems confusing. I suggest to rephrase it.

The proposed objectives of the study should be revised. I'm not sure if through a qualitative study authors are able to "determine how ethnicity affects health and examine inequality in their ethnic groups through the people's perspective". Also, there should be consistency of objectives throughout the paper, namely in the abstract, background and results.

Methods

The manuscript would strongly benefit from a strengthen methods section. In particular, authors should provide detailed information about participants, data collection procedures and instruments. More specifically:

Line 3-5 and line 17: Authors mention that there were 3 parts of the study, but should clarify in what did these parts consist - different objectives? Different regions/dates of data collection?

Different methods?

Line 30: I suggest to replace the term "ordinary people" by "health services users".

More detailed information is needed on the study participants: How were academic graduates approached and recruited? How many participants were enrolled in the study in total and by type (academics, service personnel, services users)? Is there information on their basic characteristics (age, sex, ethnic group, ...) that could be presented in a summary table? Please clarify the number of participants interviewed and the number of participants included in the focal groups. Were they the same participants? How were focal groups organized (separated by academics, services personnel and service users, or mixed groups)? In line 45, authors mention "group's interview" but this should be revised since focal group and group interview are different data collection techniques.
Clearrer information is also needed on the instruments of data collection: was there a guide for the focal group discussions? What themes were included? Regarding the in-depth interviews, what topics were explored? Were there different instruments for service personnel, academic graduates and service users? Were both instruments (FG guide and interview guide) pretested?

Further information should be provided on the year and duration of data collection and on the data collectors (interviewers and moderators were the same? Were they trained?).

I suggest to remove the term "trustworthiness".

Results

Line 5: significance of ethnicity in each personality. I suggest to remove the term "personality" as it has a specific meaning in psychological terms.

Throughout the Results section, some quotes do not reflect the results described in text and some results lack illustrative quotes. Also, more quotes from diverse type of participants (academics, services personnel, users) about each theme would enrich the results section.

In the Results section I suggest avoid referring to "subcategories" and "codes".

Presenting first the most common factors associated with health inequity and those factors less common would be helpful to further understand the findings.

Page 8, line 13: What do "geographic problems" refer to?

Page 9, line 11: What does it mean "illegality" in the context of distribution of human resources? Please clarify.

Conclusions

Line 13: Regarding the truth about health disparities as opposed to the population's feelings about these differences - I think "truth" is not the best term to use in this context as it can be misleading about the quality of data on health disparities. I suggest to replace it by "correspondence between" or "discrepancy between".
Some specific expressions need clarification/revision, such as "demands realization", "raising their awareness", "geo-strategic status".

Further limitations of the study should be discussed besides generalizability of results, for instance related to methods and procedures.

Finally, further editing to correct English would be beneficial.

**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.

Unable to assess

**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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Needs some language corrections before being published
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