Reviewer's report

Title: Assessing refugee healthcare needs in Europe and implementing educational interventions in primary care: a focus on methods

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Reviewer: Michaela Hynie

Reviewer's report:

This paper describes an important and far-reaching initiative addressing the primary health care needs of newcomers to Europe. While the project described is of great interest, the manuscript in the current form it is difficult to follow. It is not clear what is planned, what has been done, and who is being engaged in the process. The paper would benefit from a clearer description of activities and timelines by site, a clearer structure, the addition of definitions of key constructs and a thorough edit for errors.

It is not entirely clear who the intended recipients of the services will be. The authors sometimes refer to refugees and sometimes to asylum seekers. These are different migration categories that may have different needs and access to different resources and supports. The current migration flows into Europe are actually mixed migration flows. As the authors note, there are many different source countries and people are fleeing very different circumstances. For whom are these services intended? All migrants, only those who arrive and claim asylum, or only those who are awarded refugee status?

It seems that data are being collected only in points of entry for asylum seekers, so that suggests that only asylum seekers might be the focus of this initiative. If this is correct then a related question is how the diversity of these migration flows is being addressed by this initiative. Given the incredible diversity of the asylum seekers who have come to Europe, how does this model respond to and reflect that diversity? It would also be useful to indicate how they intend to conduct, or have conducted, the PLA assessments of migrant (refugee?) needs and preferences. (At some points it seemed that these have not yet been conducted but in other places it seemed that these were completed.) If the project is intended to respond to the needs of the many new migrants arriving as asylum seekers or through irregular pathways, how have they dealt with the multiple languages and cultural backgrounds of their respondents? Given the laudable emphasis the project is giving to the voiced needs and preferences of the users of the public health initiative they are describing, some clarity around how they managed this very difficult aspect of the project would be very valuable.

The program is complex and multifaceted. A figure or table that lists the elements of the initiative would be helpful in order to follow what is being implemented and how. A timeline would also have been helpful; it seems that some of the elements being described in the paper...
did not occur in the order in which they are listed in the paper, making it difficult to follow how the project is unfolding. Given that each site is necessarily defining the breadth of the intervention and choosing its own teams to train, some information could also be provided about what is being done in each site and the scope of the local interventions to get a sense of the overall scope of the program.

Given the centrality of patient centered care and the needs and preferences of the migrants in developing the intervention, I was surprised to see no mention of how the intervention will assess migrants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the intervention. A clearer statement about how the local evaluations will assess how well the intervention met each of the stated goals of the initiative would be helpful. This would be facilitated if the authors described Normalization Process Theory (NPT) and how it is being taken up in their implementation. Although the authors refer to NPT as fundamental to their approach and evaluation, they do not describe the core constructs and how they are being captured.

Other minor points: Does the statement about "low healthcare standards" (line 101) mean that standards are low or that the healthcare received is inadequate, regardless of the standards the healthcare systems aspire to?

Figure 1 (line 253) appears to be missing.

The manuscript needs a thorough editing. There are numerous grammatical errors, repeated and misplaced words, and omissions.

References


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.

Unable to assess

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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