**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** A model explaining refugee experiences of the Australian healthcare system: A systematic review of refugee perceptions.

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 13 Mar 2019

**Reviewer:** Domenico Giacco

**Reviewer's report:**

This paper reports on a systematic review of refugees’ perceptions of the Australian healthcare system.

I have the following comments:

- In the abstract (conclusions), the authors report that "There is a paucity of research in rural and remote areas and further evidence is needed in these settings." However, no findings are reported in the "results" section of the abstract that would justify that conclusion.

- In the introduction, there is a good description of the peculiarities of the Australian health systems and of legal frameworks/procedures for refugee status in that country. Yet, being an international journal I would have expected some mention of how the evidence as collected in Australia can be of benefit in other countries (with similar characteristics). And, on the other hand, why evidence from international studies would not be applicable to the Australian context.

- The search was updated to February 2018. Would the author rule out that an update might be beneficial? Do they believe that there would be many more papers published on the topic in the last year or rather not?

- I am not quite clear about an aspect of inclusion criteria. Was it required that all participants in a study were refugees or up to a certain percentage (and if the latter, which percentage?) I am asking for clarifications as Wohler et al., 2017 review appears to be focusing on "culturally and linguistically diverse women" (who would not be necessarily refugee) and at least another paper (Valibhoy, Szwarc, et al. 2017 - Description of barriers young people face in accessing mental health services in Australia) does not seem to be specific to refugees. If they were qualitative studies, how did the authors specifically retrieve the factors which were specific to refugees?
Whilst acknowledging that many of their findings are consistent with international literature, the authors state that "This systematic review adds to the body of evidence by providing an Australian context of the health system" and emphasising the interaction between information and familiar avenues that refugee use to support their access to and understanding of health care services. Do the authors believe that this finding would more likely to arise in a context such as the Australian one (and why?) or is it just an oversight of the previous literature which was captured by the present systematic review? Moreover, the previously mentioned finding is not discussed in the implications, despite it is believed to be a novel (and specific) finding of this review.

I don't believe that not capturing the experiences of health service providers in delivering care to refugees is a limitation as it was not part of the research question. It could be a suggestion for further research which appears to have been taken up and brought forward by the same team of researchers.

It would be interesting to discuss instead limitations of the inclusion criteria as I mentioned above. Were only studies in which all participants were refugees included? Or were there also others in which refugees were only part of the sample? If in the latter case the findings on refugees were analysed separately from other participants, how was this done? If there will be more clarity on this, then limitations of the approach used may be discussed.

An additional limitation may be that only participants with obtained refugee status were included, whilst asylum seekers were excluded. Asylum seekers would experience at least some barriers that were identified for refugees (and from what we know in international studies more barriers). Also, all refugees would have been asylum seekers before achieving refugee status. Was this choice made in relation to the Australian context or were there other reasons for this?

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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