Reviewer's report

Title: Effects of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on child mortality and vaccination rates: a synthetic control analysis

Version: 1 Date: 17 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Reviewer's report:

REVISION ASSESSMENT FROM THE ACADEMIC PEER REVIEWER:

Has the author addressed your concerns sufficiently for you to now recommend the work as a technically sound contribution? No

Reviewer comments: Essentially, I appreciate the authors' responses to my previous comments.

1. P. 4, the authors defensed: "(w)e did not transform any of the other variables because prior studies have not transformed them and the interpretation is easier with the raw variables. And, of course, there is no requirement for independent or dependent variables to be normally distributed in any of our analyses" -- Pardon me, but I believe the assumption of normal distribution of data/variable is essential in nearly all inferential analyses, including regression analysis. Indeed, violation of such an assumption is a very grave concern. (https://iovs.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2128171).

Hence, it is implausible that "of course, there is no requirement for independent or dependent variables to be normally distributed in any of our analyses". Actually, as the authors used means, rather than medians, in their presentations of the results of descriptive statistic (Tables 2 and 3), it implied that the authors ASSUMED that data WOULD be normally distributed. Nonetheless, many variables were indeed skewed as a number of large standard deviations attested. I am curious regarding what those prior SEMINAL studies are as to be able to support the authors' uncommon declarations.
2. Although the authors claimed that "(w)e are unaware, however, of any general prohibition on citing sources in the results section and note that doing so is a fairly common practice in this journal", I do not understand the rationales behind the choice of citing any reference in the Results section, since the Results section is simply to present the authors' current findings without any interpretation or discussion. Stated differently, there is no need for the authors to cite references in Results since in doing so, the purpose should be to compare their results with previous findings in the related literature.

--- "In the Results section, simply state what you found, but do not interpret the results or discuss their implications."

(https://www.springer.com/gp/authors-editors/authorandreviewertutorials/writing-a-journal-manuscript/introduction-methods-and-results/10285524)

More important, the fundamental issue is that the flow of the original manuscript was problematic.

3. Lastly, I have another issue with the author's response:

My previous comment: 3. Table 1 is quite perplexing. In 1991, there were 42 countries adopting CRC, but only 39 of them existed in 1990. Hence, it means that there had been 3 new countries founded in 1991 around the world. By the same token, there were 3 newly established countries in 1992, 6 in 1993, 5 in 1994, and so on? Is it really the fact?

Response: It is true that many new countries were formed in Eastern Europe during the early 1990s after the breakup of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. The reviewer's interpretation of the table is not quite correct, however, as the differences between the first two columns indicate the number of countries that newly adopted the CRC each year AND were not in existence in 1990. Thus, there were 3 countries that adopted the CRC in 1991 that did not exist in 1990, 3 countries that adopted the CRC in 1992 that did not exist in 1990, and so on.

I am too STUPID to comprehend how my interpretation of Table 1 was incorrect as well as different from the authors' own interpretation?
My comment: "In 1991, there were 42 countries adopting CRC, but only 39 of them existed in 1990. Hence, it means that there had been 3 new countries founded in 1991 around the world. By the same token, there were 3 newly established countries in 1992."

vs.

Authors' response: "The reviewer's interpretation of the table is not quite correct ...... Thus, there were 3 countries that adopted the CRC in 1991 that did not exist in 1990, 3 countries that adopted the CRC in 1992 that did not exist in 1990, and so on".

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.

No

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

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

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