**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Near-death experiences, attacks by family members and absence of health care in their home countries affect the quality of life of refugee women in Germany - a multi-region cross-sectional gender-sensitive study

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 02 Oct 2017

**Reviewer:** Angela Nickerson

**Reviewer’s report:**

Thank you for the opportunity to review the manuscript "Near-death experiences, attacks by family members and absence of health care in their home countries affect the quality of life of refugee women in Germany - a multi-region cross-sectional gender-sensitive study". This study addresses an important and under-researched issue; namely the unique experiences of female refugees and how these contribute to psychopathology in these populations. The manuscript was clearly written and the authors investigated a number of important constructs in the study. I did have some queries about the study.

First, the authors state that this sample is "representative" of female refugees in the region at the time. They state that they contacted the Federal Office for Migration to obtain statistical data about the distribution of the refugee population and to calculate quotes for enrolment in each project site. Was this the primary criterion the authors used to determine if the sample was representative? To my reading, the sample seemed to be largely volunteer-based following information sessions presented at shared reception facilities. Accordingly, while the number of refugees who participated from each site may have been representative of the number of refugees in each area; it is not clear that these refugees were indeed representative in terms of the number from each community of origin, nor whether the individuals were representative of their communities. A volunteer sample such as this (rather than approaching pre-selected individuals on the basis of random sampling) limits the extent to which prevalence rates can be investigated as it may be the case that those individuals who self-identified as willing to participate either under- or over-reported psychological distress. Accordingly, it's not clear to me the extent to which prevalence rates determined from this study can be compared to the European reference sample - this would depend on the methodology used in this comparison sample.

From my reading of the methods, it appears the authors considered the correlation between individual traumatic experiences and sociodemographics and mental health outcomes, which allowed them to determine which variables should be included in the regression. The authors assessed over 20 traumatic events. I'm not sure the extent to which a correlation between the occurrence of a single traumatic event and mental health symptoms is meaningful, especially given trauma exposure tends to cluster in this population. I did wonder why the authors did not take a dimension reduction approach, identifying sub-categories of trauma exposure which may provide more robust variables within which to conduct these analyses.
Overall, this was an interesting study that investigated an important issue. I believe it could represent a potentially important contribution to the literature if the authors are able to address the queries raised above.

**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.

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.

I am able to assess the statistics

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

Acceptable

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?
5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal