

Peer Review Report

Review Report on Health risk behaviours by immigrants' duration of residence: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Review, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Nico Vonneilich

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EVALUATION

Q 1 Please summarize the main theme of the review.

Based on a systematic review, the authors address the question of the extent to which the length of stay in the destination country influences health-risk behaviors. They analyse quantitative studies published between 2000 and 2019. Risk-behaviors of interest are alcohol, tobacco and drug-use, physical inactivity and dietary habits.

Q 2 Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

Major strengths of the review is that in current literature a synthesis on the association of duration of stay in host-countries and health risk behaviors is currently lacking, therefore the authors contribute to an existing research gap. Another strength is the profound methodology of the paper.

There are two major limitations in this paper. The review lacks a profound theoretical background or explanatory model. Second major limitation is that the review respectively the studies included in the review can not be used to analyze change as they are mostly based on cross-sectional data.

Q 3 Please provide your detailed review report to the authors, structured in major and minor comments.

I thank the authors for their profound review and their work. From my point of view, there are two major limitations that need to be addressed before this manuscript is ready for publication.

My first major comment is that the title of the manuscript suggests that changes in health risk behaviors over the time and duration of residence in a new country of residence are analysed. But how can you measure change in health behaviors when all you have is cross-sectional data? The authors can analyse associations of health behaviors with duration of residence, but not change. In order to analyse change you need longitudinal data, ideally data from cohort studies that enable to analyse individual patterns of health behavior over time. As this is not the case in almost all studies included in the review (117 cross-sectional, 6 longitudinal).

My second major comment focuses on the lack and almost complete absence of theoretical background of the paper. Why would one expect changes in health risk behaviors the longer people live in a new country of residence? This is not explained sufficiently in a profound theoretical or conceptual matter. I would suggest to refer to explanatory models such as the Model of Liane Schenk et al (2007, in this journal IJPH) in order to explain the health of migrants and in order to explain why one would expect different outcomes over time. This needs to be explained carefully.

A minor comment is that the heterogeneity of the migrant sample needs to be addressed! Immigrants are a very heterogeneous group. And in the review a great number of different countries are analysed, with very different subsamples of immigrant populations. In order to further our understanding and in order to prevent false stereotyping this needs to be addressed more carefully.

Another minor comment addresses the methodology of the paper. It has not been explained sufficiently how the authors managed to analyze 10,409 records by hand. Why has the search not been narrowed? It is difficult to imagine that after more than 10,000 initially detected studies just 123 made it into the final review. This needs to be addressed by the authors.

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4 Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?

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Q 5 Does this manuscript refer only to published data? (unpublished data is not allowed for Reviews)

Yes.

Q 6 Does the manuscript cover the issue in an objective and analytical manner

Yes.

Q 7 Was a review on the issue published in the past 12 months?

No.

Q 8 Does the review have international or global implications?

It might.

Q 9 Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

The title needs to be revised by the authors.

Q 10 Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes.

Q 11 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

yes

Q 12 Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Yes.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 13 Quality of generalization and summary



Q 14 Significance to the field



Q 15 Interest to a general audience



Q 16 → Quality of the writing



REVISION LEVEL

Q 17 → Please take a decision based on your comments:

Major revisions.