

Peer Review Report

Review Report on Response to COVID-19 in the Central African Republic: Coping strategies combined with China's experience

Review, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Justin VEUTHEY

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EVALUATION

Q 1 Please summarize the main theme of the review.

MAIN THEME: This report attempts to grapple with many important and meaningful issues. At the heart of it, I see an attempt to understand what can be taken from the Chinese pandemic response and used in the context of the Central African Republic (CAR). It is a worthy endeavor, and I strongly encourage the authors to pursue this worthwhile objective. Below are some of my suggestions to make this article publishable.

Q 2 Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

LIMITATIONS

The article needs to underline the significant differences that exist between China (the world's second largest economy with a highly educated population and a very "strong" state) versus the CAR, that has been ripped apart by decades of civil war and that is lodged in a highly volatile part of the African continent. A couple of lines or a short paragraph to explain the geo-historical context (resource curse, colonial history, etc.) of the CAR could be useful for the reader unfamiliar with the region.

STRENGTHS

The theme and subject matter is the article's greatest strength, in my eyes. While China and the CAR certainly are very different countries in all regards, there are nevertheless lessons that the CAR could learn from the Chinese experience. Indeed, while China is the process of becoming the world's largest economy, it also has (one of) the largest population(s) in the world. This means that when a pandemic hits, the Chinese authorities need to rely on many low-cost strategies to provide safety to their population. All the more so, that until the 1990s, China had a GDP per capita quite comparable to many African countries. So, all this to say, that I very sincerely hope the authors will revise and resubmit, because I am convinced they are on to an important and meaningful paper.

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

MAJOR COMMENTS

My main major comment is in the weakness I mentioned above. That said, other major comments are that I am not always certain the references are the right ones. Indeed, there are a few references that seem wholly unconnected to the text. Such as ref 5 on line 51, or ref 12 on line 106, or ref 13 on line 135 (really, the Journal of Oncology?), or ref 15 on line 162, or ref 18 on line 231. Similarly, Lines 178 to 182 could benefit from a source, to buttress this interesting and encouraging point.

MINOR COMMENTS

My "minor" comments are mainly stylistic. What is the year of the source material in the data in line 39 to 43. I am assuming on line 44 that we are talking about US dollars, but that needs to be made explicit. Lines 47 to 48: "skilled birth attended health personnel"? This might be a typo or a regional expression, but I think a simpler expression would be clearer. Perhaps "midwife"?

Line 55, I believe it should be “flew” and not “flown” from Milan.

Line 64, it might be OK to write Hopkins University, but I think it is more common to use the full John Hopkins University.

Line 67, “Currently, there was” there is something wrong with the grammar here.

Line 96, there are two periods at the end of the phrase.

Line 112 and 113, in the title, it is unclear who the authors are talking about. Similarly, in lines 117 to 127, the subjects of this paragraph need to be made more explicit. Help your readers understand your (compelling and interesting) story.

Line 142. OK teams from 19 provinces, but that is out of how many total across the country?

Line 144. “except for Wuhan City” I don’t understand what the authors are trying to say here.

Line 158, third word from the end of the line needs a space “andbasic”

Lines 161 and 162, I don’t understand what they mean by the “tension at the point of the people.”

Lines 177 to 182. That’s a great point, but what’s the source to this assertion?

Line 204. Grammar.

Line 231. Again, is this really the right source?

Lines 238 to 241. What kind of a pipe-dream is this? In view of the geopolitics and instability of the region, not to mention the near absence (or very weak presence) of the State, how can the authors suggest “adequate border management?”

Line 264. A space is missing after the source.

Line 268, there needs to be consistency in the use of figures, and it should be 1,075 people.

Still on 268, I’m really unclear on whether there is a mistake with that figure.

Line 269, are they talking about Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières, in French) MSF?

Line 287, there is a comma missing in the figure 3,314.

Line 309, what are the authors talking about “assistance for-necessities”?

Line 330, the US provides \$400 million? There is no date and that’s just above the cost of a single 474 Jumbo Jet. What does that kind of money mean in the CAR? How much does the US usually give? What are the geopolitics involved? Then the authors mention China’s vaccine package with a precise date, but no financial amount. I think all of this is super interesting and important and I wish the authors would pack more of this into the actual text and not only in the conclusion.

PLEASE COMMENT

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

Sort of. But lots of strange sources.

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

No.

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?

Yes, very certainly.

Q 9 Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

Yes.

Q 10 Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes.

Q 11 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

No. Unfortunately, while the language is generally pretty descent, there are some significant grammatical shortcomings. Sometimes leaving the reader in doubt of what the authors are trying to say.

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

Not Applicable.

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.
