

Peer Review Report

Review Report on “Hard-to-reach” or hardly reaching? Critical reflections on engaging diverse residents from low socio-economic status neighborhoods in public health research

Hints and Kinks, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Patrick Brzoska

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EVALUATION

Q 1 Please describe the new method reported in this manuscript, and its purpose.

Not applicable (see below)

Q 2 Please highlight the limitations and advantages.

The experiences and solutions presented by the authors are hardly new or unexpected and it remains unclear how the manuscripts adds to existing research (see below)

Q 3 Are there objective errors or fundamental flaws? If yes, please detail your concerns.

No.

Q 4 Check List

Is the English language of sufficient quality?

Yes.

Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Not Applicable.

Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner, including the primary manuscript(s) that describe the methodology?

Yes.

Are the quantitative or qualitative methods sufficiently explained and documented?

Yes.

Are the quantitative methods valid and correctly applied? (e.g. sample size, choice of test)

Not Applicable.

Are the qualitative methods valid and correctly applied? (e.g. sample selection, method of data collection)

Not Applicable.

Are the data underlying the study available in either the article, supplement, or deposited in a repository?

Not Applicable.

Does the study adhere to ethical standards including ethics committee approval and consent procedure?

Not Applicable.

Q 5 Please provide your detailed review report to the editor and authors (including any comments on the Q4 Check List):

Review of the manuscript “ ,Hard-to-reach‘ or hardly reaching? Critical reflections on engaging diverse residents from low socio-economic status neighborhoods in public health research” submitted to the International Journal of Public Health.

In their manuscript, the authors deal with the challenges associated with recruiting vulnerable population groups for studies in health research. As the authors succinctly point out in their first paragraph, socioeconomically disadvantaged populations are often excluded from health research studies, because of the additional resources that need to be applied to recruit them by means of commonly applied methods of data collection. Their exclusion from research can further exacerbate already existing health disparities. The authors correctly point out that “hard-to-reach” generally only means that commonly applied recruitments methods are not suitable to recruit some populations easily.

Following a general introductory paragraph, the authors continue by presenting experiences from their own study and highlighting some of the challenges encountered – all of which will be very familiar to researchers working with vulnerable populations. For example, it is only natural that recent immigrants have little proficiency of the language of the host country (here: English and French) and that, in research involving these population groups, it is a common approach to use translated/adapted self-administered questionnaires or – to also address limited reading and writing skills – interviewer-administered approaches to data collection. The experiences and solutions presented by the authors are therefore hardly new or unexpected and it remains unclear how the manuscripts adds to existing research. Instead of describing how common approaches from the field of research on vulnerable populations have been applied, the authors may, for example, consider focusing on the methodical applications of some of the decisions taken. For instance, switching the data collection method from online self-administered questionnaires to interviewer-administered paper-and-pencil questionnaires may substantially affect the validity of the instruments used and can introduce new challenges which, in turn, need to be addressed by adequate strategies.

While the manuscript in its present form is well written and enjoyable to read, the value for researchers in the field will likely remain very limited. Consequently, in my opinion, it is not suitable for publication as a Hinks&Kinks article in IJPH in its present form. Once substantially revised, resubmission may be considered.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 6 Rigor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q 7 Method validated by effective results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q 8 Applicability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q 9 Significance to the field	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q 10 Interest to a general audience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q 11 Quality of the writing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

REVISION LEVEL

Q 12 What is the level of revision required based on your comments:

Major revisions.