

Peer Review Report

Review Report on Article type: Original Article Health service use among migrants in the German National Cohort (NAKO) – The role of birth region and language skills

Original Article, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Stefan Essig

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EVALUATION

Q 1 Please summarize the main findings of the study.

In the LPA, the migrant groups showed no relevant differences compared to non-migrants regarding HSU. In separate analyses, general practitioners and medical specialists were used comparably to slightly more often by first-generation migrants from Eastern Europe, Turkey, and resettlers. In contrast, the use of psychologists/psychiatrists was substantially lower among those groups.

Q 2 Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

See below.

Q 3 Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.

I appreciate the quality and importance of the submitted manuscript. Nevertheless, I suggest that the authors adapt some parts of the manuscript:

Major:

- 96 and 304: "Sufficient knowledge of the German language was required to participate" / "migrants with little knowledge of German... were not part of the study": I don't understand how migrants with bad language skills were included in your study if knowledge of German is required to fill out the survey. Please explain in the discussion part.
- 16 and throughout the manuscript: The included migrants are not "average" migrants. You mention this limitation in the discussion section. It would be best if you mentioned this fact earlier; it is essential to interpret the study correctly. I suggest you add one sentence at the beginning of the results section of your abstract, summarising the characteristics of the included population of migrants.
- Discussion: I am unsure if the discussion fully embraces the implications of comparing "average" locals with "non-average" migrants. Let's assume many of the migrants went through a lot of hardship; many were not well off in their home country, were highly intelligent, were able to learn German etc. You, therefore, compare "above-average" migrants with "average" locals and find that their use of services is similar. What does that mean? Would this result be expected? Hypothetically, how would the result look like if you compared the migrants with locals that were selected according to the mentioned characteristics of the migrants?
- Results and discussion: You only present adjusted results. What if the adjustment in the regressions removed the effect of essential characteristics of being a migrant, i.e. made them similar to locals so that the use of services also becomes similar? I suggest that you add the unadjusted results (and maybe a "basic model" with only gender and age in the model?) to see how the adjustment is affecting the results. From a point-of-view regarding service provision, this result would be necessary to understand the needs of migrants better even if some of these needs have an underlying reason that they share with locals (e.g. being female or old).

- 256 and table 3: "less appropriate" is probably incorrect as the LPA was performed without flaws. The LPA created highly homogenous groups among all participants that include locals and (similar) migrants alike, as discussed above. The differences you found in the second part of the analysis did not depend on this first step of categorisation, and you were more likely to find a difference.

Minor:

- Table 2: "Mean frequency": What is it, visits/consultations?
- Figure S1: "based on the frequency": What is it, visits/consultations? Label the y-axis.

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4 Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

Yes

Q 5 Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes

Q 6 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

Yes

Q 7 Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Yes.

Q 8 Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)

Yes

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 9 Originality



Q 10 Rigor



Q 11 Significance to the field



Q 12 Interest to a general audience



Q 13 Quality of the writing



Q 14 Overall scientific quality of the study



REVISION LEVEL

Q 15 Please make a recommendation based on your comments:

Major revisions.