

## Peer Review Report

# Review Report on Determinants of unmet health care needs during the final stage of the COVID-19 pandemic: insights from a 21-country online survey

Original Article, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Zeus Aranda

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### EVALUATION

#### **Q 1** Please summarize the main findings of the study.

Based on the analysis of online survey data on the utilization of health services and some sociodemographic characteristics of the population in 21 countries, the study reflects the key role of distrust in health personnel, the educational level of the population and food insecurity as determinants of the utilization of health services.

#### **Q 2** Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

One of the strengths of the study is the large sample included in the study and the variability of the sample, with participants from 21 countries. The methodology of analysis is also comprehensive and robust. One of the limitations is the framing of the study in the COVID-19 pandemic, which is not highly relevant to assess its impact because of the study design (with a single data collection point) and the timing of data collection (late 2022/early 2023), the final stage of the pandemic before it is declared to be over in May 2023 by WHO.

#### **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.

There are two minor revisions that I think the authors should undertake:

Introduction (review other sections):

The study design does not allow for a determination of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health services utilization, but rather a description of the status of health services utilization and its determinants in the late stages of the pandemic prior to declaring its end in early May 2023. I believe that this point should be emphasized throughout the article, just as it could be specified in the title that the study is contextualized in a late stage of the health emergency.

Methods:

It is not clear to me how participants were recruited (although it is indicated that it was through Facebook), which may partly determine the degree to which there may be participant selection bias. Is it a banner ad on Facebook? Are users of the platform contacted by direct message or mail?

### PLEASE COMMENT

#### **Q 4** Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

I believe that the title should specify that the study takes place in the final stage of the pandemic.

#### **Q 5** Are the keywords appropriate?

Should include "chronic care", "COVID-19 pandemic" and "healthcare utilization".

**Q 6** Is the English language of sufficient quality?

English is adequate.

**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, it does.

#### 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:

Minor revisions.