

Peer Review Report

Review Report on Disability and Migration Routes: an Explorative Analysis Among Refugees Hosted in Italy

Original Article, Int J Public Health

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EVALUATION

Q 1 Please summarize the main findings of the study.

The paper carries out an interesting survey on the prevalence of persons with disabilities or functional limitations in the refugee population in Italy. In addition to describing the characteristics of the sample of this population, which is difficult to observe except with ad hoc surveys – such as this one – and the prevalence of persons with disabilities, it estimates the association of some of their characteristics with them. It would appear, from the estimates obtained through Odds ratios, that in the population surveyed there is a high prevalence of disabled people, accentuated among women and in people from the central Mediterranean route.

Q 2 Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

The study addresses an issue on which there is a lack of knowledge and could contribute to the identification of needs expressed by a particularly vulnerable population. It enrolls hard-to-reach populations and may offer a contribution to the literature, at least in terms of describing an unfamiliar population and for generating hypotheses about the most prevalent needs, also in relation to specific characteristics (such as origin and gender).

The work neglects various methodological aspects concerning the definition of the sample, the choice of the linear model for estimating relative risks, the definition of the adjustment variables and the treatment of possible biases in the descriptive approach adopted. In this regard, see the suggestions for changes or additions 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.

The work needs minor revisions and appears to suffer from possible limitations that require major revisions. Both revisions are reported in the comments of the PDF. In relation to the major ones, there may be non-negligible limitations on the representativeness of the sample and respondents, as well as confounding in the estimates. In particular:

- it would be useful to have more details on the centres involved in the survey and whether they are distributed throughout Italy
- it would be necessary to know whether there is a sampling list of the subjects to be selected and whether a random sampling technique was applied, which would guarantee representativeness, or whether the sample is opportunistic – with the limits of non-representativeness to be made explicit and attempted to be documented
- it should be specified which model was adopted (logistic) and which variables were considered for the adjustment of the estimates. Furthermore, it would need to be argued why, given that the logistic model could overestimate the Real Risk (RR) estimates since some outcomes are frequent and some RRs are higher than 2–2.5, this model was chosen and not another linear model that does not entail this problem (such as the log-binomial model)
- the possible non-representativeness of the respondents and limitations in the models analysed (other risk factors not considered in the analysis) should be commented on as a limitation

- the purely descriptive nature of the work should be stated, which should also be expanded in terms of possible comparison groups (e.g. by detailing the migrants' areas of origin, once the appropriate power was available), whereas reporting the estimated statistical power could erroneously suggest a study of an aetiological nature.

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4 Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

The title is attractive and concise, but it may be misleading, since rather than a critical analysis it appears to me to be an initial description of the phenomenon.

Q 5 Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes, but rehabilitation is an indication and a possible action, given the results. It does not belong to the results; this term could be replaced with another keyword.

Q 6 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

Yes, English is of sufficient quality to me.

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

No.

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

Yes, it seems so to me.

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.