

# Review of: "Demographic and Clinical Characteristics of Refugee Children Utilizing Healthcare Services of Türkiye (2021- 2022): A Single-Centre Study"

Joy Eze<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Nigeria

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

## **Reviewer's comments RN32SO.3**

Thank you for the opportunity to add my input to this manuscript. The authors are commended for an attempt to highlight the health concerns of a very vulnerable group of children (Refugees).

It is hoped that the comments provided here will be found useful in the revision of the manuscript.

### **Abstract:**

Study Aim: The study aims to describe healthcare utilization patterns, which is not consistent with the title of the study, which suggests an evaluation of demographic and clinical characteristics of the pediatric refugee population admitted to emergency, outpatient, and inpatient services. A clarification is needed.

Results:

Comments: Results of the clinical characteristics of the study participants were presented, but there was missing demographic information. A description of the demographics will suffice.

It is thought that demographic information would be part of the results presented, as this appears to be a part of the study aims.

Conclusion:

A review of the conclusion is suggested to capture the conclusions drawn from the findings and possibly provide possible future directions for the healthcare services for these refugees.

### **Main text**

#### **Introduction**

'To meet the healthcare needs of refugees and to prepare for future immigration scenarios, a thorough analysis of healthcare utilization during times of significant migration is helpful. Several studies have shown that emergency departments provide easy access to care at any time or place, with the absence of administrative barriers and up-front

medical cost [4].'

Comments.....This narrative suggests that ease of access to care at any time or place and possible barriers or absence of barriers and medical cost are aspects of healthcare utilization that would be studied. It doesn't appear to be the case here.

The study aim, as stated in the abstract section (to describe healthcare utilization patterns), is also incongruous with the aim stated in the introduction section, which is to identify health risks and medical needs of refugees.

## Methods

The data variables collected from the various sections (emergency department, outpatient, and inpatient) were non-uniform.

For instance, in addition to the demographic information, data in OC included the presence of malnutrition and anemia, the percentile value of height, the value of hemoglobin (Hg), mean corpuscular volume (MCV), ferritin, vitamin B12, and the 25-hydroxy vitamin D (25-OH) levels, history of routine childhood vaccination/chronic disease/intake of breastfeeding, and supplementary food status. These varied from data collected in the ED (date of ED visits, triage category, diagnosis, symptoms on admission, status of Covid-19 disease, inpatient hospital admissions, and history of intoxication, scabies, and chronic illness) and those of IS (diagnosis, duration of hospitalization, the presence of malnutrition, the percentile value of height, history of routine childhood vaccination, and the presence of chronic disease in the patient or family. Also collected was the diet, including breastfeeding and supplementary foods, and the presence of consanguineous marriage, and hospitalization requiring respiratory support, which included oxygen therapy with mask and non-rebreather mask and high-flow oxygen).

Comments: Were there validated tools that guided the collection of these data? Were the data sought for in this study determined from a preexisting study and informed by previous published works? A clearer description of the analysis plan of the data is needed for a better understanding of health care utilization in this cohort. Concerns about the reproducibility of this study following outlined methodology abound.

An extensive review of the Turkish health systems will suffice for a better understanding of the impact of the influx of refugees on these systems.

## Results

Comments: A clearer methodological approach would have guided the presentation of the extensive data that was collected. The results presented had a lot of information that was not clearly presented to aid better understanding of the intended messages vis-a-vis the objectives of the study.

An in-depth presentation was made on the clinical characteristics of those studied; however, reference to these details was lacking in the study aims.

## Discussion

Comments: Additional perspectives not originally captured in the methods section and in the results are being explored in this section.

.....There are few studies describing signs and symptoms of acute medical needs in refugee children. In a European survey study, respondents indicated that skin and soft tissue infections, child safety concerns, mental health issues, and weight loss were seen more commonly in refugee children than in the local population [17]....

Comments: Could the authors explain the relevance of this narrative in this discussion? The index study was not a comparative study; thus, a clear discussion on the need to relate the findings of the index study (medical needs of refugees) with those of the general population will suffice.