OPEN PEER REVIEW

Open Peer Review (OPR)

As a new feature for progressing towards transparency, we decided to open a new window for all of our editors as well as authors titled "**Open Peer Review**". We hope by this new facility, our reviewers will be more motivated and authors will be more satisfied with the review process. We believe that publishing our peer review reports could make a transparent and clear environment for all our efforts within a journal, but not all reviewers tend to publish their comments.

What is "Open Peer Review" process?

An "Open Peer Review" process is making the details of all review process (including reviewers, associate editors, and EICs comments) as "Public" as it is agreed by EIC, Authors, and reviewers.

Advantages of "Open Peer Review" process

- More transparency, constructiveness and tactful comments of the peer review process: leads to an increase in the quality of reviews
- More motivations for all involved roles in the review process
- Authors' satisfactions from the review process: Increases honesty between authors and reviewers
- Education of both authors and new students
- Prevents reviewers from following their individual agendas and leading to the detection of reviewers' conflicts of interests

You can find out more at:
https://sites.kowsarpub.com/kowsar/knowledgebase/category/tree.html#opr.html

Health Scope
Article DOI: 10.5812/jhealthscope.88589
Published in: Health Scope: 9(1); e88589

Peer Review Report for "Health Care Utilization Inequality in a Mixed Public-Private Health Care System: An Insight from the National Survey in Iran"

Author(s): Mohammadreza Zakeri, Kamran Bagheri Lankarani, Zahra Kavosi, Ramin Ravangard

Review Timeline:

Submit Date: 1 Jan 2019
Revised Date: 18 Apr 2019
Accepted Date: 2 May 2019

Revision (0)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | Revision (0)

14 Feb 2019

The dear editorial board of health scope journal:
Some comments for the author are mentioned below. Please consider them. Also, I think it is better than the Plagiarism detection in the manuscript is checked via appropriate software by the editor of the journal and I have no comments in this regard.
- English writing in different sections has some problems. The article needs to be revised grammatically by a native English writer
- The referencing is based on Vancouver style but for example in the discussion section, the author's names of other articles and references are mentioned like Harvard referencing style. Rather than the author's name you should point to the country in which study was conducted. Furthermore, you should mention that Kermanshah or Kerman are provinces in Iran. Because the journal is an international journal and the readers are from different countries and they don't know Iranian cities.

Finally, the manuscript is acceptable after being revised based on the comments.

Best regards
Salavati

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 16 Feb 2019

Abstract:
Write background and objective briefly.
How data were analyzed?
Remove the word “we” from the manuscript.
Introduction: Integrate paragraphs.
Use of published paper:
1. Public Hospital Utilization among Syrian Refugees in Turkey
Method: describe ethical considerations.
Discussion: describe the limitations of the study.

Best,

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 18 Feb 2019

This paper addresses an important research topic by health care utilization inequality in a public and private health care system in Iran. The paper applied an appropriate method to obtain relevant data from quite a good sample size. It has the potential to make a good contribution to the current gap of knowledge regarding the inequality in the utilization of health services among Iranians. However, there is a substantial lack of clarity and conciseness in the way the paper was written, thus making it difficult to understand. Also, several inconsistencies and inaccuracies were present in reporting the results. For example, we suppose Rural Family Physician (FP) provides just in rural areas, while in table 2 there is a utilization of FP for urban areas, too! In summary, the topic and the material of this study are good. But substantial rewriting needs to make to contextualize the study question, to justify the main statistic model, to report, and discuss the findings. The following comments should consider for improving the manuscript.
Abstract
• There are grammatical errors, please seek the help of an editorial service or a native English speaker to proofread your paper
• Please rewrite the abstract to improve the clarity of this section.

Introduction
• The subsection of “Health care delivery in Iran” has no references. Please add related references to this section.

Methods

• The public and private utilization of health services are included separately. Please why didn’t total utilization, both public and private, too? The total utilization of health services can provide valuable information about total access to health services in different socioeconomic groups.
• Please explain more about non-confounding variables. Which variables were non-confounding?
• Some of the variables such as age and education have too many categories. Please decrease the categories to better interpret of results.

• Please explain why you didn't other methods such as the Wagstaff decomposition method to measures affecting factors on the inequality?

Results

• In table 2, what do the authors mean about "Number of visits per year"? Is it the per capita number of services used by people?

• In table 5, please add a 95% confidence interval instead of standard error.

Discussion

• The magnitude of inequalities is low for both pro-poor and pro-rich inequalities, however, the authors didn't clarify this finding in the discussion.

• Please add strengthens and weaknesses of the study.

Conclusion

Can the authors further elaborate on this?

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision (0)** 19 Feb 2019

Dear Editor,

The first review process of this manuscript is finished. According to the reviewer's comments, the manuscript needs "Minor Revision".

Best Regards

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision (0)** 22 Feb 2019

This paper addresses an important research topic by health care utilization inequality in a public and private health care system in Iran. The paper applied an appropriate method to obtain relevant data from quite a good sample size. It has the potential to make a good contribution to the current gap of knowledge regarding the inequality in the utilization of health services among Iranians. However, there is a substantial lack of clarity and conciseness in the way the paper was written, thus making it difficult to understand. Also, several inconsistencies and inaccuracies were present in reporting the results. For example, we suppose Rural Family Physician (FP) provides just in rural areas, while in table 2 there is a utilization of FP for urban areas, too! In summary, the topic and the material of this study are good. But substantial rewriting needs to make to contextualize the study question, to justify the main statistic model, to report, and discuss the findings. The following comments should consider for improving the manuscript.

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OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear editor,

The researchers should thank you and the dear reviewers for the valuable and corrective comments. According to your and the reviewers' comments, the following revisions or responses were made:

- The Abstract was checked and reviewed by a native person and the grammatical errors were corrected.
- The Abstract was rewritten and improved in order to become clearer and more concise.
- The related references for *"Health care delivery in Iran"* in the Introduction were added.
- The total of GP visit, SP visit and hospital admission were added to the Results. As it can be seen in the Results, the focus has been on the public and private sector utilization. It has been discussed in the Discussion, too.
- The non-confounding variables were explained more in the Methods.
- The categories of the age and education decreased.
- About the use of Wagstaff's decomposition method it should be noted that the present article is a descriptive one for representing the health care utilization inequality in the public and private sectors using huge information. The present study did not aim to explain the socioeconomic related inequalities and the decomposition of concentration index as well as factors affecting the inequities.
- In Table 2, "Number of visit per year" means the per capita number of services used by people. It was corrected in this Table.
- In Table 5, the 95% confidence intervals were provided instead of standard error.
- The magnitude of inequalities hasn't been discussed because all CIs have been low and very close to each other (according to Figure 1). On the other hand, the results of the present study haven't been comparable with the results of most of other previous studies conducted in Iran because of, in our knowledge, using different methods, different data or databases, and not separating the public and private sectors.
- The strengthens and weaknesses of the present study were provided in one paragraph at the end of The Discussion.
- The results were further elaborate on and more details and explanations were added.

Reviewer 1:

- The article was revised and rewritten in order to become clearer and more concise.
- The authors should thank the dear reviewer for his/her careful consideration. The article was checked and revised and some errors in the CIs were corrected.
- As dear reviewer knows, in Iran the family physicians are working in the rural areas as well as the cities with less than 20000 populations. In other words, some urban populations have access to the family physicians, too. This has been explained in "Health care delivery system in Iran".
- The Abstract was checked and reviewed by a native person and the grammatical errors were corrected.
- The Abstract was rewritten and improved in order to become clearer and more concise.
- The related references for *"Health care delivery in Iran"* in the Introduction were added.

- The total of GP visit, SP visit and hospital admission were added to the Results. As it can be seen in the Results, the focus has been on the public and private sector utilization. It has been discussed in the Discussion, too.
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- The strengthens and weaknesses of the present study were provided in one paragraph at the end of The Discussion.
- The results were further elaborate on and more details and explanations were added.

Reviewer 2:

- The background and objective was provided in the Abstract.
- The data were analyzed using STATA and ADePT Software. As you know, ADePT has the capability to distinguish the type of data, like continuous, binary or count data, and it can choose and fit the best model by advanced algorithm.
- The word of "we" was removed throughout the article.
- The paragraphs of the Introduction were revised and integrated.
- In the present study, the secondary data related to a national survey has been used. This study has been approved by the Ethical Committee of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. It was added to the article.
- This was a descriptive study and there isn't any limitation.

Reviewer 3:

- The article was checked and reviewed by a native person and the grammatical errors were corrected.
- The bibliography and reference list was corrected according to the Vancouver style.

It should be noted that all revisions were highlighted in the article.

Sincerely,

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision (1)** 23 Mar 2019

Dear Associate Editor,
The manuscript needs minor revision as follows:
1. The continuation of Table 1 (page 13) is ambiguous and has not been given any explanation in the text.
2. According to the first line of the Methods section, the data from the national Utilization of Health Services Survey (UHSS) in 2014 were used in this study. In some cases, however, in the text of the paper, the words "annually" or “per year” are used to service utilization (Paragraph 1 page 12, paragraph 1, page 14). Please check and correct these items.
3. It is recommended that Tables 4 and 5 be merged. Similarities to Table 2 can also be eliminated.
4. Add “in 2014” to the title of Table 3.
5. Explain how to calculate the Achievement index and its interpretation in the Method section.
6. There are a number of typos mistakes in the article that need to be corrected, such as 1.62 in paragraph 1 page 12, as well as (1.682 vs. 1.429) in paragraph 1 page 13, which do not match the corresponding numbers in Table 2.
7. It is suggested that the last paragraph of the article (paragraph 1 page 18) be merged with the preceding paragraph (last paragraph of page 17).
8. Paragraph 1 Page 17 the phrase " Achievement index for …" is ambiguous!
9. According to the Methods section, people were asked about outpatient and inpatient health services used during the last two weeks and the last 15 months, respectively. Please explain how these data turned into annual data?
10. In some cases, the results of the study have been justified with regard to the effects of the HTP on the utilization of the services (for example, paragraph 3, page 23). While the HTP has started in May 2014, and the data from national UHSS in 2014 were used in this study, in which people were asked about inpatient health services used during the last 15 months. How is this contradiction justified?
11. Funding/Support of the study should be added to the paper.
12. Conflict of interest should be added to the paper.

Best Regards

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision (1)** 6 Apr 2019

Dear Editor,

The second review process of this manuscript is finished. According to reviewer comments, the manuscript needs "Minor revision".

Best Regards

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision (1)** 13 Apr 2019

Dear author
The manuscript needs minor revision as follows:
1. The continuation of Table 1 (page 13) is ambiguous and has not been given any explanation in the text.
2. According to the first line of the Methods section, the data from the national Utilization of Health Services Survey (UHSS) in 2014 were used in this study. In some cases, however, in the text of the paper, the words "annually" or “per year” are used to service utilization (Paragraph 1 page 12, paragraph 1, page 14). Please check and correct these items.
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11. Funding/Support of the study should be added to the paper.
12. Conflict of interest should be added to the paper.

Best Regards

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (2)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear editor,

The researchers should thank you and the dear reviewers for the valuable and corrective comments. According to your and the reviewers' comments, the following revisions or responses were made:

1. The continuation of Table 1 was provided clearer and further explanations were provided in the text.
2. The words of "annually" or "per year" were corrected in the text.
3. Tables 4 and 5 have provided different values and data of health care utilization, i.e. the non-standardized and standardized values, and they cannot be merged. Also, the similarities in table 2 which were the data related to the deciles of household scores were removed.
4. "in 2014" was added to the title of Table 3.
5. The calculation of the Achievement index and its interpretation were provided in the Methods section.
6. The typos mistakes in the article, such as 1.62 in paragraph 1 page 12, as well as (1.682 vs. 1.429) were corrected according to the corresponding numbers in Table 2.
7. The last paragraph of the article (paragraph 1 page 18) was merged with the preceding paragraph (last paragraph of page 17).
8. In Paragraph 1 Page 17 the phrase, "Achievement index for …" was revised by providing more explanations.
9. The people were asked about outpatient and inpatient health services used during the last two weeks and the last 15 months (from last autumn season), respectively. It was added to the Methods section.
10. First, we should thank the dear reviewer for his/her nice comment. As you may know, the Georgian year overlaps with the Persian year in three month. The present study data was adjusted for 12 months of Georgian year 2014 by removing first three months of data collection. Therefore, the researchers again adjusted the data for last 9-months of year 2014 (first 9-months of Persian year, 1393), in which the HTP was started. Then the researchers adjusted the 9-month utilization to one year through multiplying inpatient variables by 12/9. It has been added to the Methods section.

It should be noted that all revisions were highlighted in the article.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ramin Ravangard

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (2)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (2) 28 Apr 2019

Dear Editor,

The second review process of the manuscript is finished and it is revised according to the comments of reviewers. The final decision for this manuscript is “Accept”.

Best Regards

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (2) 2 May 2019

Dear author
The final decision for this manuscript is “Accept”.
Best regards