

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form (<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/site/about/resources/checklist.pdf>) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Exploring discrimination and racism in healthcare: a qualitative phenomenology study of Dutch persons with migration backgrounds.
AUTHORS	Zemouri, Charifa; Nait Kassi, Assia; Arrazola de Oñate, Wouter; Coban, Gökhan; Kissi, Ama

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Hasche, Leslie University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work
REVIEW RETURNED	29-Jan-2024

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>This study explores how 81 Dutch patients with migrant backgrounds have experienced discrimination and racism in healthcare through a free-form online survey that included one open-ended question regarding patients' experiences with discrimination. Some limitations of sampling bias are acknowledged and the limited data collection through a free-form answer may minimize ability to expand upon the themes. Yet, the large sample and depth of answers do offer important contributions to exploring intersectional ways that discrimination is perceived. The introduction and discussion are informative and draw upon relevant literature. I offer these comments for consideration:</p> <p>Page 9, line 134, In describing the sample, I am unclear how the eligibility criterion were applied. Were they participants' responses to the open-ended question only analyzed if all items were answered or if they said they experienced discrimination? Did this mean the sample was only 81 participants because of that exclusion process? And how was missing data handled?</p> <p>Page 10, line 15, The description of the data analysis is vague. Could you specify who did the analysis, what was used to 'color code' themes, and how this follows the 6-step plan (and even what that plan is?)</p> <p>Page 11, line 175, In the results describing the sample, could it be stated more clearly what was the survey respondent description and the actual eligible sample descriptive? And was any associations between demographics and experiences of discrimination found, as it does seem like more women and other possible subgroups were included in the findings.</p>
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	<p>Page 11, line 182: given that the sample included for analysis is 81, I think the abstract should reflect that. I also think that is important for how the calculations of frequency of themes is reported in Table 2, since those numbers are for 81 not 188.</p> <p>Page 11, 184, my biggest concern for the manuscript is that the description of the themes is somewhat vague. Could these be expanded upon to explain more in the text what is meant in terms of examples and how the themes may be distinguished from one another. I struggled to understand what would be considered under one theme versus the other. The table added some detail, but not all quotes seem to align (Example page 15, line 41, on "I was forced to eat pork..." seems like a potential discriminatory behavior versus a negative attitude.).</p> <p>Page 21, line 340: Then, later in the discussion, while it is said that responses could be coded in multiple themes, then the writing seems to point of distinction, "...prejudice versus not being taken seriously"</p> <p>Page 20, line 327, I wonder if sample bias may also want to specify that the survey was provided in Dutch language only, so language bias may have impacted the sample? A few places may have improved clarity by selection of more precise wording: - Page 5, Line 69, I am not sure what is meant by 'big' in terms of size, impact, consequences. - Page 9, line 131, 'the worth of mouth' may mean 'word' instead? - Page 9, line 144, "June until July 202" can the year be specified? - Page 11, line 175, Should it say 'One hundred eighty-eight participants'?</p>
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REVIEWER	Newman, Bronwyn Macquarie University, Australian Institute of Health Innovation
REVIEW RETURNED	01-Feb-2024

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to review your paper, this is valuable piece of work with sound methods. I have some feedback that I have presented below in 2 sections:</p> <p>1. Typos, referencing and grammar:</p> <p>There are some typos throughout that would benefit from a proof read. Some specific examples Line 5 : Short title is missing text, needs a word after 'by', line 53 (strength)</p> <p>The referencing is a little inconsistent, sometimes you include detailed references and other times they are not listed with the concept. it is best if statements are directly linked to the relevant references eg. lines 68-73, 78 need references added.</p> <p>Line 114 -edit , this is colloquial ' on the receiving end'</p> <p>Line 175 – I think this needs to read One hundred and eighty eight. In abstract and line 114 – states that the survey was Free form answers? The survey had a mix of multiple choice and text , not sure what free form or free text and this is not clear in the way you have expressed here.</p>
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	<p>Long sentences in the conclusion could be edited and cut down for clarity</p> <p>2. Content: The paper reads well and has relevant content, but would benefit from inclusion of more detail and critical discussion, particularly in the results section.</p> <p>p.5 Introduction . The second paragraph of the introduction requires editing for clarity (paragraph starting line 78). The concepts are there, but this is difficult to follow re. biological differences and assumptions.</p> <p>The results section requires significant editing to provide analysis and evidence of the conclusions reached. Information provided requires further extraction as it remains quite descriptive. One way to strengthen the results section would be to incorporate quotes in the text to link evidence/examples throughout and explore further in each theme as these elements are very brief. For example Quote 1 in explicit discrimination 'approached in a racist way' ?? is quite general and further discussion is needed. Language barriers ... 'After the birth of my child, I suddenly saw in the documents that I had a Moroccan background and that my wife spoke the Dutch language well.' ? requires context for reader to understand the significance.</p> <p>Discussion- if results are developed further as described these concepts could inform the discussion and provide more detail to enhance the content.</p> <p>Limitations – further consideration and discussion about inclusion criteria, needed to answer in Dutch and full sentences.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to review your work.</p>
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer: 1 Dr. Leslie Hasche, University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work	
Page 9, line 134, In describing the sample, I am unclear how the eligibility criterion were applied. Were they participants' responses to the open-ended question only analyzed if all items were answered or if they said they experienced discrimination? Did this mean the sample was only 81 participants because of that exclusion process? And how was missing data handled?	The methods section on eligibility has been rephrased and specified. From the 188 filled questionnaires, 108 did not fit the eligibility criteria. The reasons for exclusion are reported in the first paragraph of the results section including handling the missing data.
Page 10, line 15, The description of the data analysis is vague. Could you specify who did the analysis, what was used to 'color code' themes, and how this follows the 6-step plan (and even what that plan is?)	Thank you, we first only reported the references where the steps were explained. We have added the 6-steps to the methods section. We hope that this is sufficient.

<p>Page 11, line 175, In the results describing the sample, could it be stated more clearly what was the survey respondent description and the actual eligible sample descriptive? And was any associations between demographics and experiences of discrimination found, as it does seem like more women and other possible subgroups were included in the findings.</p>	<p>This is excellent feedback, which is why we added two things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Methodology: the descriptive analysis of the survey responders using the closed questions. 2. Reported on the associations on the survey population. These were conducted on the total survey population. However, the thematic analysis was only done for the participants who met the eligibility criteria, this was noted in the methods section by moving the eligibility criteria.
<p>Page 11, line 182: given that the sample included for analysis is 81, I think the abstract should reflect that. I also think that is important for how the calculations of frequency of themes is reported in Table 2, since those numbers are for 81 not 188.</p>	<p>The abstract is edited. The frequency is calculated. The frequency of themes was calculated by counting how often a theme occurred per response. This information was added to the methods section. Also, while double checking the data, we excluded one response because it did not fit the eligibility criterium – not a single word as answer-; this was the response from a participant who answered 'hoofddoek' (veil).</p>
<p>Page 11, 184, my biggest concern for the manuscript is that the description of the themes is somewhat vague. Could these be expanded upon to explain more in the text what is meant in terms of examples and how the themes may be distinguished from one another. I struggled to understand what would be considered under one theme versus the other. The table added some detail, but not all quotes seem to align (Example page 15, line 41, on “I was forced to eat pork...” seems like a potential discriminatory behavior versus a negative attitude.). Page 21, line 340: Then, later in the discussion, while it is said that responses could be coded in multiple themes, then the writing seems to point of distinction, “...prejudice versus not being taken seriously”</p>	<p>We agree with your remarks. Therefore, we have added the description of each theme in the designated paragraph in the results. We have also addressed the following matter “Multiple answers can be categorised under multiple themes due to the intersectionality and interpretation of the data.” The struggle about where to park an answer is also addressed in the results as you can see under the third theme ‘prejudice.’ We agree that the term discriminatory behaviour fits the data better than negative attitude. We edited the negative attitude to discriminatory behaviour by</p>

	<p>encompassing it in the description of the theme.</p> <p>We have also added your concern to study limitation in the discussion section.</p> <p>We hope that our current description and discussion has resolved this matter.</p>
<p>Page 20, line 327, I wonder if sample bias may also want to specify that the survey was provided in Dutch language only, so language bias may have impacted the sample?</p> <p>A few places may have improved clarity by selection of more precise wording:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Page 5, Line 69, I am not sure what is meant by 'big' in terms of size, impact, consequences. - Page 9, line 131, 'the worth of mouth' may mean 'word' instead? - Page 9, line 144, 'June until July 202' can the year be specified? - Page 11, line 175, Should it say 'One hundred eighty-eight participants'? 	<p>We have added the language bias to the discussion section. This has also been added to the S&L section after the abstract.</p> <p>The typo's:</p> <p>Big, changed into persisting.</p> <p>Worth -> word-of-mouth</p> <p>202 → 2022</p> <p>Hundred eighty-eight → One hundred eighty-eight.</p>
<p>Reviewer: 2</p> <p>Dr. Bronwyn Newman, Macquarie University</p>	
<p>There are some typos throughout that would benefit from a proof read. Some specific examples Line 5 : Short title is missing text, needs a word after 'by', line 53 (strength)</p>	<p>Thank you, we went again through the manuscript.</p>
<p>The referencing is a little inconsistent, sometimes you include detailed references and other times they are not listed with the concept. it is best if statements are directly linked to the relevant references eg. lines 68-73, 78 need references added.</p>	<p>Thank you for this fine remark! We went again through the references list and added references to the concepts in the designated lines.</p>
<p>Line 114 -edit , this is colloquial ' on the receiving end'</p>	<p>This has been edited.</p>
<p>Line 175 – I think this needs to read One hundred and eighty eight.</p>	<p>This has been edited.</p>
<p>In abstract and line 114 – states that the survey was Free form answers? The survey had a mix of multiple choice and text, not sure what free form or free text and this is not clear in the way you have expressed here.</p>	<p>The content of the survey has been removed from this section since the survey has been elaborated upon in the methods section.</p>

Long sentences in the conclusion could be edited and cut down for clarity	We have rewritten the conclusion by shortening and rewriting the sentences. We hope this is better now.
The paper reads well and has relevant content, but would benefit from inclusion of more detail and critical discussion, particularly in the results section.	Thank you for this comment, it fits with the comment of reviewer 1, and we have added more detail to the results section by elaborating on the definition of the themes.
p.5 Introduction . The second paragraph of the introduction requires editing for clarity (paragraph starting line 78). The concepts are there, but this is difficult to follow re. biological differences and assumptions.	Thank you for this insightful observation. We have edited this paragraph for clarity and to distinguish between biological differences and assumptions.
The results section requires significant editing to provide analysis and evidence of the conclusions reached. Information provided requires further extraction as it remains quite descriptive. One way to strengthen the results section would be to incorporate quotes in the text to link evidence/examples throughout and explore further in each theme as these elements are very brief. For example Quote 1 in explicit discrimination 'approached in a racist way' ?? is quite general and further discussion is needed. Language barriers ... 'After the birth of my child, I suddenly saw in the documents that I had a Moroccan background and that my wife spoke the Dutch language well.' ? requires context for reader to understand the significance.	Thank you for this valuable comment. We agree and have rewritten the result section by providing a clear description of the theme, and how they differ, and by incorporating quotes that support these findings.
Discussion- if results are developed further as described these concepts could inform the discussion and provide more detail to enhance the content.	Thank you for this remark. The result section has been rewritten and detail has been added. We hope this is better now.
Limitations – further consideration and discussion about inclusion criteria, needed to answer in Dutch and full sentences.	We agree and have added this to the study limitations of the discussion section.

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Hasche, Leslie University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work
REVIEW RETURNED	11-Apr-2024
GENERAL COMMENTS	Thank you to the authors for their thoughtful review and efforts to incorporate our feedback. I particularly appreciated the added

	<p>detail on the analytic approaches. Upon reviewing the revised manuscript, the added detail throughout the results is very helpful, yet I offer these comments:</p> <p>Page 11, Could you add clarification for how theme (2) Prejudice and theme (3) 'Not been taken seriously' are distinct when considering both reference 'resulted in dismissing the patient's concerns; and 'where concerns ... where dismissed'. I am still confused on how these may differ.</p> <p>Page 12, Am I interpreting correctly that a distinction between theme (1) explicit discrimination and theme (4) discriminatory behavior may relate to access and use of services in the first theme, versus patient interactions and engagement in the second theme? It seems to appear that way, and if so, it may help to further specify that.</p> <p>As a general comment, given all the edits and the use of 'track changes', I would also recommend a final proofreading of the manuscript once all changes are accepted.</p>
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VERSION 2 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

1. Page 11, Could you add clarification for how theme (2) Prejudice and theme (3) 'Not been taken seriously' are distinct when considering both reference 'resulted in dismissing the patient's concerns; and 'where concerns ... where dismissed'. I am still confused on how these may differ.

We have rewritten this part by specifying the direction. The direction of 'prejudice' is from the healthcare worker towards the patient before healthcare delivery. The direction of 'not been taken seriously' is from the perspective of the patient experiencing that the healthcare worker does not take their need for healthcare seriously and thus disregards it.

2. Page 12, Am I interpreting correctly that a distinction between theme (1) explicit discrimination and theme (4) discriminatory behavior may relate to access and use of services in the first theme, versus patient interactions and engagement in the second theme? It seems to appear that way, and if so, it may help to further specify that.

Excellent observation; thank you for making this relationship explicit. We have added a sentence per theme to specify that for:

- In theme 1, explicit discrimination relates to healthcare worker-patient interaction and interpersonal engagement (after access and during healthcare service use).

- In theme 4, the discriminatory behaviour relates to healthcare worker-patient interaction and interpersonal engagement (after access and during healthcare service use).
- We did explain in the paper that this type of qualitative research sometimes leads to partially overlapping themes or answers that can be put in more than one theme. We believe this “flaw” not to majorly affect the main conclusions of this phenomenology study.

3. As a general comment, given all the edits and the use of ‘track changes’, I would also recommend a final proofreading of the manuscript once all changes are accepted.

After addressing point 2 and 3 of the minor revisions, we created a new document, accepted the track changes and then did a final proofreading.

All co-authors have agreed on the final version of the manuscript. We value the thorough review process and the opportunity to refine our work. Your feedback has been invaluable in enhancing the clarity and strength of our manuscript. Thank you for your time and consideration.