



04-May-2021

BMJ-2021-065065

The health and social needs of low-skilled migrant construction workers: who is responsible?

Dear Dr. Onarheim,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to consider this paper, which we have discussed.

We are pleased to make a provisional offer of publication if you are able to revise it to address the points made by the referees and the editors. The referees' comments are available at the end of this letter, and the points raised by the editors are set out below.

Please ensure this second paper does not overlap with the first paper 065066 and is distinct. This paper discusses the evidence and examples for how countries could maximise the health now of migrant workers involved in construction for mega sporting events (065066 is concerned with development of the evidence base). The 2 papers can of course refer to each other.

We hope that you will be able to revise the paper and send it back to us within one week. When you resubmit, could you kindly ensure that you provide:

- (a) A covering letter outlining how you have responded, or not responded and why, to both the referees comments and those of the editors.
- (b) A word count (excluding the references and words in boxes and tables). You should aim to keep this count below or very close to 2000 words.
- (c) Please check that all the information required in the manuscript (see note below) is included in the revised manuscript.

To revise your manuscript, log into <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/bmj> and enter your Author Center, where you will find your manuscript title listed under "Manuscripts with Decisions." Under "Actions," click on "Create a Revision." Your manuscript number has been appended to denote a revision.

We hope that you will be able to revise the paper and send it back to us within one month.\*\* All accepted Analysis articles are published on [thebmj.com](http://thebmj.com), the canonical version of the journal. Please note that only a proportion of accepted Analysis articles will also be published in print. \*\*

You may also click the below link to start the revision process (or continue the process if you have already started your revision) for your manuscript. If you use the below link you will not be required to login to ScholarOne Manuscripts.

\*\*\* PLEASE NOTE: This is a two-step process. After clicking on the link, you will be directed to a webpage to confirm. \*\*\*

[https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/bmj?URL\\_MASK=7452c5a35c44466e8903c6aad1eb08fc](https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/bmj?URL_MASK=7452c5a35c44466e8903c6aad1eb08fc)

You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer.

Once the revised manuscript is prepared, you can upload it and submit it through your Author Center.

When submitting your revised manuscript, you will be able to respond to the comments made by the reviewer(s) in the space provided. You can use this space to document any changes you make to the original manuscript.

IMPORTANT: Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.

I hope you will find the comments useful.

Best wishes,

rhurley@bmj.com

#### INFORMATION TO INCLUDE IN REVISION

Please would you also check that you have provided the following information

\* Competing interest statement (in the style explained at <http://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-authors/forms-policies-and-checklists/declaration-competing-interests>)

\* Contributorship statement + guarantor  
(see <http://resources.bmj.com/bmj/authors/article-submission/authorship-contributorship>)

\* Copyright statement/ licence for publication (see <http://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-authors/forms-policies-and-checklists/copyright-open-access-and-permission-reuse>)

\* Signed patient consent form(s), if the article gives enough personal information about any patient(s): - (see [http://resources.bmj.com/bmj/authors/editorial-policies/copy\\_of\\_patient-confidentiality](http://resources.bmj.com/bmj/authors/editorial-policies/copy_of_patient-confidentiality))

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

Reviewer: 1

Recommendation:

Comments:

Recommendations: Reject

Thank you for the opportunity to review this interesting analysis paper.

This paper writes about an important global health concern, the health and treatment of low skilled migrant workers. It provides an argument of how mega sporting events could be used to collect data, and shine a light on possible health inequities and policies for these workers. I certainly am happy to see these concerns detailed and the opportunity for more quality research to make policy change. The paper itself outlines the risks for serious health inequities and suggests more research using the mega sport events to shine light on this issues.

My major concern is that is in its current title and form, it will likely not be effective as a BMJ Analysis paper. To begin, the title includes several new and unfamiliar concepts to readers: low level, migrant labour, construction, mega sports events. I consider these four elements as proving potential misunderstandings for the general medical readership. Given the importance of a title in attracting and bringing a summative or declarative meaning to a piece, we see a serious problem here. . The paper itself does provide some important examples of health inequities, however I fear for impact it would need more background in global health, migrant workers in general, and clear definitions and

background on the field of health inequities. This paper currently aligns better with a specialty journal that is able to ensure the audience already has all these complex concepts and definitions clearly established and this would facilitate reader understanding and impact.

I interpret the thesis behind this paper as: there are a group of low paid, and low skilled international construction workers (migrant labour) who may face higher rates of death and disability. Preliminary research suggests serious health inequities and higher mortality, but more research is needed to confirm. The mega sports events appears to provide an opportunity to study health inequities and this could lead to better policies that prevent health inequities.

The challenge is how to communicate these rather complex concepts to a general medical readership. Perhaps a series of papers would be more reasonable to develop the background and understanding of this area.

**Additional Questions:**

**The BMJ** uses compulsory open peer review. Your name and institution will be included with your comments when they are sent to the authors. If the manuscript is accepted, your review, name and institution will be published alongside the article.

If this manuscript is rejected from **The BMJ**, it may be transferred to another BMJ journal along with your reviewer comments. If the article is selected for publication in another BMJ journal, depending on the editorial policy of the journal your review may also be published. You will be contacted for your permission before this happens.

For more information, please see our [peer review terms and conditions](https://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-reviewers).

**Please confirm that you understand and consent to the above terms and conditions.** I consent to the publication of this review

Please enter your name: Kevin Pottie

Job Title: Professor, Family Medicine and Epidemiology and Community Medicine

Institution: University of Ottawa

Reimbursement for attending a symposium?: No

A fee for speaking?: No

A fee for organising education?: No

Funds for research?: No

Funds for a member of staff?: No

Fees for consulting?: No

Have you in the past five years been employed by an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper?: No

Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper?: No

If you have any competing interests <a href="http://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-authors/forms-policies-and-checklists/declaration-competing-interests" target="\_new"> (please see BMJ policy) </a> please declare them here:

<em>BMJ are working with <a href="https://orcid.org/" target="\_blank">ORCID</a> to recognise the importance of the reviewer community. Reviewers are now able to share their activity by connecting their review to their ORCID account to gain recognition for their contributions.</em>

Only the Journal title will be uploaded into the reviewer's ORCID record, along with the date the record was uploaded; there is no identification of the article's title or authors. Records are uploaded once a decision (accept, reject, or revision) has been made on the article.</em>

Would you like to be accredited by <a href="https://orcid.org/" target="\_blank">ORCID</a> for this review?: Yes

Reviewer: 2

Recommendation:

Comments:

An excellent article.

While some mass gathering events are considered as a public health priority (see: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)30501-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)30501-X/fulltext)) with increasing importance placed on human mobility and health emergent from the event itself, there is little by way of global public health attention to the health vulnerabilities of low waged and low skilled labour migrants that are part of the larger development process of building/maintaining the venues of such mass gathering events.

This is a well written and researched piece and I fully endorse the core actions proposed including the need for UN and global health agencies to advocate to relevant member states to ensure health impacts of labour migrants are enshrined and assessed PRIOR to and during the development of such facilities/complexes and indeed during the event itself.

Additional Questions:

<strong><em>The BMJ</em> uses compulsory open peer review. Your name and institution will be included with your comments when they are sent to the authors. If the manuscript is accepted, your review, name and institution will be published alongside the article.</strong>

If this manuscript is rejected from <em>The BMJ</em>, it may be transferred to another BMJ journal along with your reviewer comments. If the article is selected for publication in another BMJ journal, depending on the editorial policy of the journal your review may also be published. You will be contacted for your permission before this happens.

For more information, please see our [peer review terms and conditions](https://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-reviewers).

**Please confirm that you understand and consent to the above terms and conditions.**: I consent to the publication of this review

Please enter your name: Dr Kolitha Wickramage

Job Title: Head Migration Health Research and Epidemiology, UN Migration Agency

Institution: UN migration agency

Reimbursement for attending a symposium?: No

A fee for speaking?: No

A fee for organising education?: No

Funds for research?: No

Funds for a member of staff?: No

Fees for consulting?: No

Have you in the past five years been employed by an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper?: No

Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper?: No

If you have any competing interests [please declare them here](http://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-authors/forms-policies-and-checklists/declaration-competing-interests): none

*BMJ are working with [ORCID](https://orcid.org/) to recognise the importance of the reviewer community. Reviewers are now able to share their activity by connecting their review to their ORCID account to gain recognition for their contributions.*

*Only the Journal title will be uploaded into the reviewer's ORCID record, along with the date the record was uploaded; there is no identification of the article's title or authors. Records are uploaded once a decision (accept, reject, or revision) has been made on the article.*

Would you like to be accredited by [ORCID](https://orcid.org/) for this review?: Yes

Reviewer: 3

Recommendation:

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper. It is the second in a series focusing on the important need to understand and respond to the health needs of lower-skilled migrant workers engaged in the construction of facilities for global sporting events. These are welcome and necessary contributions to the field of migration and health, and the development of a research agenda in response to the needs identified.

My main comment/concern links to whether this manuscript is sufficiently different from the first article in the series to justify a standalone piece. The second paper does make additional points relating to the responsibilities for protecting the health of these workers, as well as helpful consideration of whether these global sporting events provide windows of opportunity for drawing attention to the health of migrant workers in this context. Reference to Covid-19 is also welcomed - but this isn't reflected in the conclusion i.e. does Covid-19 also provide a window of opportunity? It would make sense to frame the research recommendations in a way that link to the agenda proposed in paper 1.

I suggest that the authors of papers 1 and 2 (authored by 5 of the 6 authors on paper 1) combine their contributions, incorporating the novel contributions from paper 2 into paper 1.

Alternatively, the authors could work together to ensure that there is no overlap. For example, paper 2 should remove background and refer to paper 1, and then focus on the new contributions. The role of Covid-19/the Covid-19 context could, perhaps, provide a backdrop to the framing of this piece. e.g. the role of pandemic in interrupting the movement of migrant workers and the impacts thereof - on health and wellbeing in terms of being 'stranded'/unable to return home/unable to work and what this means for health of families left behind.

Additional Questions:

**The BMJ** uses compulsory open peer review. Your name and institution will be included with your comments when they are sent to the authors. If the manuscript is accepted, your review, name and institution will be published alongside the article.

If this manuscript is rejected from **The BMJ**, it may be transferred to another BMJ journal along with your reviewer comments. If the article is selected for publication in another BMJ journal, depending on the editorial policy of the journal your review may also be published. You will be contacted for your permission before this happens.

For more information, please see our [peer review terms and conditions](https://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-reviewers).

**Please confirm that you understand and consent to the above terms and conditions.** I consent to the publication of this review

Please enter your name: Jo Vearey

Job Title: Associate Professor & Director

Institution: African Centre for Migration & Society, Wits University

Reimbursement for attending a symposium?: No

A fee for speaking?: No

A fee for organising education?: No

Funds for research?: No

Funds for a member of staff?: No

Fees for consulting?: No

Have you in the past five years been employed by an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper?: No

Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper?: No

If you have any competing interests [please declare them here](http://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-authors/forms-policies-and-checklists/declaration-competing-interests): (please see BMJ policy)

BMJ are working with [ORCID](https://orcid.org/) to recognise the importance of the reviewer community. Reviewers are now able to share their activity by connecting their review to their ORCID account to gain recognition for their contributions.

Only the Journal title will be uploaded into the reviewer's ORCID record, along with the date the record was uploaded; there is no identification of the article's title or authors. Records are uploaded once a decision (accept, reject, or revision) has been made on the article.

Would you like to be accredited by [ORCID](https://orcid.org/) for this review?: Yes

Reviewer: 4

Recommendation:

Comments:

This is an important and topical issue. My main comments are that a lot of the text relates more generally to low-skilled migrant workers rather than specifically for migrant construction workers which is the key population of interest in the document. I would like to see it revised to be better tailored to migrant construction workers and provide more details of their specific situation. While it is equally important to highlight the issues faced by low-skilled migrant workers generally, this article is meant to focus on construction workers.

Below, I highlight some of these areas.

The introduction section introduces the subject matter and sufficiently highlights the need to incorporate migrant construction workers in the context of global mega sporting events.

The health of migrant construction workers

-Much of this section is about low skilled migrant workers in general rather than specifically about migrant construction workers. It would be good to have a more focused discussion on construction workers and how they may differ from the general low skilled migrants. Can the authors highlight data pointing to this area - for example, what was found in the meta analysis that are specific to construction workers. Lines 10 - 17 need further clarification. The authors stated "The temporariness and high-pressure of work related to mega sporting events may put migrant construction workers in social situations with particular risks." What are the "social situations with particular risks"? The two subsequent sentences do not offer much in terms of explanation. It would be better to clarify what safety risk factors specifically rather than just a mention of two specific projects.

In Box 1, the last sentence that mentions the Qatar World Cup 2022's exemption from restrictions for construction workers. This merits further discussion and elaboration. It is not clear if this means the workers are not being subjected to enforced lockdowns or what restrictions and safety measures the authors are actually referring to that are being exempt, and what the implications may be.

Investing in the health and social conditions of migrant construction workers -

In relation to the health screening required by many destination countries, I am unclear as to why the authors state that following medical clearance, migrants may still have anxiety around their health. Could the authors please clarify the sentence on lines 52-53: "This may leave even those migrants who pass the health checks with a lingering sense of anxiety around their health."

The authors stated that countries relying on labour migration "revolve around on the health and wellbeing of migrant construction workers" (lines 3-4). This sentence does not make sense to me. Please clarify.

Can mega sporting events open policy windows?-

In relation to past mega sporting events, the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil was mentioned and that it led to improvements on working conditions and collective bargaining. It would be useful to discuss these in some detail - for example, how they came about and whether the changes led to any sustained improvements over time since a number of years have passed. The reforms mentioned in Qatar would also warrant some discussions as to how they came about in order to highlight what roles others (international, national, sectoral actors) can play to support this process. This can link to the next section on responses and responsibilities.

Responses and responsibilities -

This section would benefit from separating out what needs to be done in the different sectors. On the specific areas for which key stakeholders should be held accountable, it would be useful to specify what they are in more detail. "Safe working, social and living environments" are rather vague here. If this were the conclusion it would be fine but in the text there should be more clarity. Additionally, many of the guidelines on labour standards are guidelines and not obligations so countries are not 'obligated' to deliver these unless they are enacted in law. This is the main problem with many of these international standards and guidelines. It would be good if the authors could check these more thoroughly.

The moving forward section is more like a conclusion rather than a moving forward.

Lastly the document does need a thorough read to correct grammar and typos which are in the text, references and table.

Additional Questions:

**The BMJ uses compulsory open peer review. Your name and institution will be included with your comments when they are sent to the authors. If the manuscript is accepted, your review, name and institution will be published alongside the article.**

If this manuscript is rejected from *The BMJ*, it may be transferred to another BMJ journal along with your reviewer comments. If the article is selected for publication in another BMJ journal, depending on the editorial policy of the journal your review may also be published. You will be contacted for your permission before this happens.

For more information, please see our [peer review terms and conditions](https://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-reviewers).

**Please confirm that you understand and consent to the above terms and conditions.**: I consent to the publication of this review

Please enter your name: Joelle Mak

Job Title: Assistant Professor in mobile populations, migration and human trafficking

Institution: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Reimbursement for attending a symposium?:

A fee for speaking?:

A fee for organising education?:

Funds for research?:

Funds for a member of staff?:

Fees for consulting?:

Have you in the past five years been employed by an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper?:

Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper?:

If you have any competing interests [please declare them here](http://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-authors/forms-policies-and-checklists/declaration-competing-interests): (please see BMJ policy)

*BMJ* are working with [ORCID](https://orcid.org/) to recognise the importance of the reviewer community. Reviewers are now able to share their activity by connecting their review to their ORCID account to gain recognition for their contributions.

Only the Journal title will be uploaded into the reviewer's ORCID record, along with the date the record was uploaded; there is no identification of the article's title or authors. Records are uploaded once a decision (accept, reject, or revision) has been made on the article.

Would you like to be accredited by [ORCID](https://orcid.org/) for this review?:

**Date Sent:** 04-May-2021