

# Review of: "Analyzing Policy to Address Infant Mortality in High-Risk Populations"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to review this manuscript titled:

***Analyzing Policy to Address Infant Mortality in High-Risk Populations.***

The research is strongly argued for, and the manuscript is well written and focuses on an important global public health challenge.

I think the manuscript has potential for publication.

Kindly refer to my suggestions for minor corrections below on how the author can improve the manuscript.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

## Title

1. Please include the setting or context in the title. For example: ***Analyzing Policy to Address Infant Mortality in High-Risk Populations in the US***

## Abstract

2. Acronyms are not encouraged in the abstract. Also, write the acronyms in full when used for the first time (for example, the acronym: OECD).

## Introduction

3. Provide units for the value of 5.6 in this sentence: *With a national infant mortality rate of 5.6, the U.S. found itself positioned at the 33rd spot out of 36 OECD....*
4. Consistency is required throughout the document. For example:
  - a. U.S. or US
  - b. 5.6 or 5.6/1000 or 3.9/1000 live births or 5.0 per 1000 births or 5.0 deaths per 1000 births
1. Minor language editing is required. For example, in this sentence: *Geographically, states in the southern region*

*continues to exhibit the highest infant mortality rates in 2021.*

### **Purpose**

5. Check and correct grammar in this sentence: *One key factor is the significant disparity is the infant mortality rates affecting states with greater percentages of Black and rural populations.*

### **Aim and Research Questions**

6. These are clear and relevant. No need to correct.

### **Methods**

7. Appropriate and well written.

The author should indicate:

- I. The period or date of publication of the literature searched.
- II. Inclusion and exclusion criteria of the evidence searched. For example, included could be: the years the evidence was published, English language only, focus areas in the US, type of studies included, etc. Exclusion criteria: other languages not English, dates of publication excluded, areas or countries excluded.
- III. Context of search. This should also be included in the keywords.

### **Analysis Plan**

8. Specify the decades being referred to in this sentence:

*For assessment, it was important to identify the trends in the infant mortality rates in the U.S. over the past several decades.*

### **Data Sources**

9. Date is given for only the 2020 U.S. Census. Please include the dates of publication of all the sources mentioned.

### **Data analysis**

10. Further details are needed. Specify how the data was analyzed, including the software used and variables of focus.

### **Ethical Considerations**

11. All important aspects have been addressed. There is no need to amend.

### **Results**

1. In a conventional review, a summary or description of the literature or sources of data included in the research is given at the beginning of the results. Perhaps the author can clarify why the description is not provided.

2. It is also standard practice to report on the number of articles or sources searched, excluded, and included. The author should provide this information or clarify why the information is not provided.
3. The first paragraph under the Results should be moved to the section on Methods.
4. The specific Aims should also be listed under the Purpose section.
5. Specific Aim 1: include the “*live births*” in this sentence: “*Infant death per 1,000 by ethnicity was:...*” and throughout the document whenever infant mortality rates are mentioned to ensure consistency.
6. The author can include a figure or table to simplify the data presented in this section on infant mortality rates for various groups.
7. Specific Aims 2 to 4:
8. The reviewer is unfamiliar with the style of writing where the methods, results, discussion, and recommendations are all combined together. Please clarify if this is the style prescribed by the journal.
9. Please include specific results related to infant mortality rates found under those specific aims before the recommendations are given.

## Discussion

1. Provide a reference for this sentence: “*In addition, the infant mortality rate is particularly higher in the Southern region of the United States.*”
2. The Discussion needs to be expanded and supported with relevant sources. The discussion should focus on the interpretation of the results and also a comparison to other contexts or previous findings.

## Strengths and Limitations

1. The author should clarify whether the strengths and limitations refer to the programs or the present study.
2. The bulk of the information provided under this section is not presented in the Results. This needs to be included.
3. From the sentence below, the author should clarify whether the limitations refer to the present study or intervention programs: “*Limitations can be found in the allotted time for program development and implementation*”. If the limitations refer to programs, the author should state what the limitations of the present study were.

## Recommendations

1. The recommendations should be based on the results presented under each specific aim. Most of the recommendations are not aligned with the results presented.
2. “*The **evidence** from this policy analysis may be useful in guiding policymakers in the distribution and appropriation of funding to pilot programs to address infant mortality*”.

The author needs to specify the evidence being referred to in this sentence.

3. The author needs to present evidence that shows the relationship between social determinants of health and infant mortality before it can be recommended that: *Additionally, focus should be directed on underlying factors that contribute to social determinants of health that significantly contribute to infant mortality.*

## References

1. All included and properly referenced. Nothing needs amendment.