

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Paediatrics Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Mental health impact on children of forcible home invasions in the occupied Palestinian territory
AUTHORS	Moss, Dana Majadle, Ghada Milhem, Jumana Waterston, Tony

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Reviewer name: Mr. Andrew Clarke Institution and Country: Save the Children Fund, Global Programmes, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Competing interests: None
REVIEW RETURNED	20-May-2021

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>Dear authors Thank you for the opportunity to review this very interesting Editorial.</p> <p>Referring to a recently published report, your Editorial draws readers attention to an important and current issue affecting child health and wellbeing, and child and human rights, that may sometimes become lost amidst the broader spectrum of events and concerns arising from these protracted hostilities.</p> <p>I suspect that the appropriateness of publishing this Editorial, an overt advocacy piece within a contentious political arena, may arouse diverse views across the readership. However, well-grounded advocacy is and should be, an essential component and tool for protecting child health, and in that regard I believe this is an appropriate and important topic.</p> <p>The focus for child health is difficult (if not impossible) to separate from the polarised politics of the setting, and at points it becomes hard to ascertain if the primary focus of the Editorial is about the psychological consequences of home invasion or the invasions themselves; although the direct relationship between these is made clear.</p> <p>The Editorial is well written, although as an advocacy piece it adopts a very clear position and perspective on the findings of the report. Whilst that may be justified, for objectivity I think it would be important to highlight any limitations of the report and its findings to the reader – for example, to acknowledge or explain why no Ethics Committee approval was sought (as the report seems to suggest).</p> <p>Whilst not a requirement, I think the Editorial would also be strengthened by reference to the commonality (or not) of the use of home invasions by armed forces in other countries; and the effects of similar military actions on children’s mental health in other settings.</p>
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REVIEWER	Reviewer name: Dr. Raul Gerardo Mercer Institution and Country: Social Sciences and Health, Argentina Competing interests: None
REVIEW RETURNED	21-Apr-2021

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>It is a very good manuscript that presents the situation of psychological and emotional stress experienced by Palestinian children in the occupied territories as a result of the invasion of their homes.</p> <p>Some aspects need to be clarified.</p> <p>What was the age of the 41 participating children?</p> <p>When the authors mentioned the symptoms related to stress such as insomnia and difficulty falling asleep, both aspects are equivalent.</p> <p>In a couple of sections of the article it would be important to contribute more precise information. For example, when it says "Some families indicated" or "Some parents reported" Is there any magnitude of what "some" represents considering the individuals studied?</p> <p>There is a typo in reference 5,6 within the text</p> <p>One issue that should be highlighted is that even though Israel ratified the CRC it violates a basic human rights principle related to universality.</p> <p>I recommend to consider the requested minor revisions</p> <p>All my best..</p>
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REVIEWER	Reviewer name: Dr. Shanti Raman Institution and Country: South Western Sydney Local Health District, Department of Community Paediatrics, Australia Competing interests: None
REVIEW RETURNED	02-May-2021

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>General</p> <p>This is a really important topic and it deserves wide dissemination. I commend the authors on undertaking this research and advocacy. In order for this paper to be published however, it must fit into a category of publication that BMJPO currently supports. At this stage, it is not clear what category of publication this fits. It reads more like an Opinion piece in a serious magazine, than a scientific journal. If it is pitched as an Editorial, it needs to be up to 1200 words and with 5 references only. The Editorial can have subheadings and although strictly speaking no tables or figures, there is some flexibility. In addition, it needs to be a commissioned editorial. The other option is to publish it as an Original Research Letter, which would be as follows:</p> <p>Word count: up to 600 words Tables/Figures: maximum 2 tables and/or figures References: up to 6 Abstract: 100 words unstructured abstract</p> <p>My preference would be for this paper to be re-written to suit the Research Letter format, and follow a structured narrative: one paragraph for each of the following (without subheadings: Introduction; Methods; Results; Discussion. The themes extracted from the semi-structured interviews could easily be put into a Table (then words will not be counted), and divided into impacts on</p>
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	<p>parents, impacts on children, further into physical and mental health/psychosocial impacts. Finally, providing an Abstract really makes the authors encapsulate the essence of the study and findings</p> <p>Whichever category the authors decide on, this paper still would benefit from some structure to aid the readers. Some style and formatting issues need to be fixed: such as spelling out numbers <10, providing acronyms early, eg PHRI. If 31 in-depth interviews were conducted, this is a substantial study and it would certainly benefit from the Results being analysed and reported properly.</p> <p>Specific comments</p> <p>First paragraph: Should broadly state the issue and why it is important. Perhaps provide some global context on the nature of militarisation and state sanctioned terror and potential impact on children.</p> <p>The first five paragraphs could be reduced down to three, with the aims of the study stated in the last sentences of para 3.</p> <p>Methods: Is this study a subsection of the larger study carried out by PHRI involving 158 interviews of Palestinians who were subjected to home invasions? This needs to be made clear. How were participants identified and the sample constructed? What sort of analysis was carried out?</p> <p>Results/Findings: more details could be provided. What is the age range of the 41 children involved in the study? The findings could be reported under themes or categories.</p> <p>References A Life exposed needs only 1 reference.</p>
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Editorial rather than research letter: we would prefer to keep that article as an editorial

Q 1. What was the age of the 41 participating children?

Response: we have given the ages of the children

Q.2 When the authors mentioned the symptoms related to stress such as insomnia and difficulty falling asleep, both aspects are equivalent.

Response: we have revised the paper accordingly

Q.3 In a couple of sections of the article it would be important to contribute more precise information. For example, when it says "Some families indicated" or "Some parents reported" Is there any magnitude of what "some" represents considering the individuals studied?

Response: we have given numbers where available.

Q.4 There is a typo in reference 5,6 within the text

Response: we have corrected this typo

Q.5 One issue that should be highlighted is that even though Israel ratified the CRC it violates a basic human rights principle related to universality.

Response: we have added a further paragraph on the CRC

Q.6 The other option is to publish it as an Original Research Letter, which would be as follows:

Response: we would prefer to keep the paper as an Editorial

Q.7 Some style and formatting issues need to be fixed: such as spelling out numbers <10, providing acronyms early, eg PHRI. If 31 in-depth interviews were conducted, this is a substantial study and it would certainly benefit from the Results being analysed and reported properly.

Response: we have corrected these formatting points

Q.8 First paragraph: Should broadly state the issue and why it is important. Perhaps provide some global context on the nature of militarisation and state sanctioned terror and potential impact on children.

Response: we have added a sentence in the first paragraph

Q.9 The first five paragraphs could be reduced down to three, with the aims of the study stated in the last sentences of para 3.

Response: we would prefer to include the material in the first five paragraphs which we believe to be necessary

Q.10. Methods: Is this study a subsection of the larger study carried out by PHRI involving 158 interviews of Palestinians who were subjected to home invasions? This needs to be made clear. How were participants identified and the sample constructed? What sort of analysis was carried out?

Response: we have included this information

Q.11 Results/Findings: more details could be provided. What is the age range of the 41 children involved in the study? The findings could be reported under themes or categories.

Response: see response to Q.1

Q.12 References

A Life exposed needs only 1 reference.

Response: we have corrected this in the references

Q.13 It would be important to highlight any limitations of the report and its findings to the reader – for example, to acknowledge or explain why no Ethics Committee approval was sought (as the report seems to suggest).

Response: we have given information on limitations and more detail of the nature of the committee who supervised the study

Q.14 Whilst not a requirement, I think the Editorial would also be strengthened by reference to the commonality (or not) of the use of home invasions by armed forces in other countries; and the effects of similar military actions on children's mental health in other settings.

Response: our literature search has found only references to the mental health of children in armed detention or the mental health impact of military invasion (rather than home invasion). Hence we feel that this is the first study of this kind and it is difficult to provide a global context.