

Letter to the Editor

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Comment on: 'Anthropometric parameters in relation to glycaemic status and lipid profile in a multi-ethnic sample in Italy' by Gualdi-Russo *et al.*

Madam

We read the manuscript by Gualdi-Russo and colleagues⁽¹⁾ and we cannot refrain from making some remarks.

While the objective of the study is to 'examine the health status of ethnic minorities in Italy'⁽¹⁾, the research does not focus on a representative group of migrants living in Italy but on a sample of migrants apparently living in 'immigrant centres' in Bologna. It is not clear what 'immigrant centres' are. It is also not clear for how long these migrants have been living in Italy, which is an important variable if we wish to deal with the 'migration process and subsequent lifestyle changes'⁽¹⁾, or how long these migrants have been living in 'immigrant centres', which is also a variable of interest.

Of the people living in the 'immigrant centres' contacted by the authors, 401 agreed to participate and data were finally collected from a total of 301 migrants. The authors do not specify how many migrants were initially contacted. It is well known that those who agree to participate in a survey are often not comparable to those who refuse. How many migrants refused to participate? On what basis can it be assumed that those who refused are not different from those who agreed to participate? The authors devote no attention to this rather relevant aspect.

Finally, in our opinion, it is quite a serious matter that while nationality is specified for all other migrants, the Roma are simply identified as such. The authors describe a population of 'immigrants and Roma': does this mean that Roma are not immigrants? Are the Roma of Italian descent? In this case, the authors should explain why Italian Roma are living in an 'immigrant centre'. On the other hand, if the Roma are also migrants, why is their nationality not specified?

Do the authors believe the Roma are all 'nomads', as most of civil society believes? This would explain why they are not considered migrants, even if they are not Italians.

We remember that when Roma fled from the war in former Yugoslavia, the Italian authorities refused to grant them refugee status, for several reasons: (i) 'How can nomads escape from a country?' (ii) 'Nomads wander around.' (iii) 'If they are nomads they cannot be refugees.' (iv) 'Nomads are not supposed to have a nationality.'

We sincerely hope that this is not the case, and that the authors will be able to provide a full explanation for their choice of wording.

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Reference

1. Gualdi-Russo E, Zaccagni L, Dallari GV *et al.* (2015) Anthropometric parameters in relation to glycaemic status and lipid profile in a multi-ethnic sample in Italy. *Public Health Nutr* **18**, 438–445.