

Reviewer's report

Title: Socio-economic differences in life expectancy among persons with diabetes mellitus or myocardial infarction: results from the German MONICA/KORA study

Version: 2 **Date:** 31 August 2009

Reviewer: Richard Peter

Reviewer's report:

This paper is well-written and focuses an important question in social epidemiology in combination with an interesting statistical approach. However, several points should be taken in to account.

Major compulsory revisions

1) Page 8, measurement of SES: the computation of one index including different indicators of social stratification is critically discussed in the literature. Single indicators of social status do not necessarily complement each other. They are more likely to represent different aspects of social inequality (Geyer et al 2006 in JECH). Accordingly, it is recommended not to compute one single measure but to analyse indicators of social status separately.

2) Increasing parts of the working population in modern societies are characterized by social status inconsistency. The authors precluded information about social status inconsistency. This lead to the exclusion of an important group concerning social inequality in health. Due to this exclusion underestimation is likely since effects of status inconsistency on cardiovascular health have been shown to be greater than effects of status consistency (see Peter et al 2007 in JECH). I recommend to either include subjects characterized by status inconsistency in the analysis or to argue very carefully why they have been left out.

Minor essential revisions

3) page 8 first para: The description how the income variable was computed is not understandable.

4) References: German article and book chapter titles need an English translation.

Discretionary revisions

5) page 9 Has information about the endpoints (myocardial infarction / diabetes) been objectively validated?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.