Reviewer's report

Title: The effect of survey method on survey participation: Analysis of data from the Health Survey for England 2006 and the Boost Survey for London

Version: 2 Date: 2 August 2010

Reviewer: Jeanette Ziegenfuss

Reviewer's report:

The revised manuscript is much more clear. The strengths of the paper are now more aptly showcased. What remains are minor essential revisions and discretionary revisions. These are summarized below.

Minor essential revisions:
1. In the conclusion of the abstract, the statement, "This may be due to features of..." suggests that the core and the boost were administered to different geographies. Clarify that the metro characteristics are less responsive to the boost than the core method if this is in fact what you mean.
2. In the introduction, second paragraph, you state that "using a self-completion questionnaire... maximizes the sample size for a given budget." I think what you mean is that it balances the need to stay within a budget and keep as much of the underlying design as possible.
3. In the fourth paragraph of the introduction, you include a summary of reasons for item nonresponse. I think that both the topic of the question and the placement of the question should be added to this list.
4. In the first paragraph of the methods, please clarify that the nurse visit and the self-completion questionnaire are completed at the same initial visit. While this point becomes clear eventually, it would be good to have this clarification here.
5. The first time that you mention nonresponse weights, include a statement about which characteristics are used to create these weights.
6. You mention the different length of the household components being a reason for a lower household response rate in the core. How different were the lengths? What percent of an interview had to be completed to be considered a complete? Please add these pieces of information to the methods.

Discretionary revisions:
1. In the response to my initial review, you state the unusual design characteristics of the boost sample design. This point may be a good discussion point.
2. In the second paragraph of the methods, fourth sentence, and throughout, suggest using a different word than “calling” to avoid confusion with a telephone interview.
3. In the seventh paragraph of the discussion, you talk about the reason for item
nonresponse in the boost being due to routing issues rather than reluctance to answer. This seems too speculative as an alternative hypothesis could be that with an interviewer present, an individual does not think that they have the option not to answer, although they would still prefer not to.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.