Reviewer's report

Title: Do agreements between adolescent and parent reports on family socioeconomic status vary with household economic stress? A cross-sectional analysis in Taiwan.

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Reviewer: Luis Rajmil

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This study analyzes parent-adolescent agreement on reporting family socioeconomic status in first year high school students in Taiwan (n= 2700, mean age 13 y). The main purpose of the study was to check the hypothesis that the level of agreement would varies by household economic stress. They found higher agreement for parental education, followed by parental occupation and lower agreement for the family income. Moreover, the degree of agreement varies by socioeconomic stress reported by parents. As expected, family income level showed the higher percentage of missing values, mainly on parent responses. The objective of the study was clearly stated. Methods and presentation of results are easy to follow and it seems that the conclusions are based on the results. Nevertheless, in my opinion the study presents some major concerns that should be taken into account.

Major changes

1) The main concern refers to the principal independent variable. What does mean authors by family socioeconomic stress? What is the background and definition of this variable? Intuitively and looking at the 2 questions from this questionnaire it would be highly correlated with SES, mainly family income, and influenced by several psychosocial factors. Then it should be necessary to clearly define this variable in the introduction and to include information about its validity and reliability. Although authors mention in the discussion section something regarding this issue in my opinion it is not enough to justify the main purpose of the study.

2) Related to the previous question: do authors discarded colinearity between household economic stress and the SES variables? This should be done as a necessary previous step in the study.

3) Moreover, one could guess that household economic stress would be more negatively correlated to family income level and less correlated with parental education, and probably it would be much less stable across time than a year, depending on other factors, such as employment status, feelings of economic security, etc. Problem with reliability and validity of this factor would be solved analyzing test-retest in a short period of time, carrying out cognitive interviews for content validity analysis, and comparing the answers to the specific questions
with some “external” measure of similar concept for convergent validity.

4) A second step should be to present a table with prevalence of household economic stress by the SES variables. Then, depending on these previous results next step would be to analyze agreement stratified by the SES level variables.

5) Independently on the statistically significance of these results another question arises looking at the results on table 3: Are they “clinically” meaningful?. For example: Kappa for father education changed from 0.87 to 0.78 according to the household economic stress, and for father occupation kappa ranged from 0.31 to 0.39, etc. Maybe presenting 95%CI of kappas would be more convinced.

Minor changes

6) The household economic stress was collected only from parents. Why authors did not collect also this information from adolescents and analyzed the extent of agreement on this variable?

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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