Reviewer's report

Title: Validity of two simple measures for estimating life-course socio-economic position in cross-sectional postal survey data in an older population: results from the North Staffordshire Osteoarthritis Project (NorStOP)

Version: 3 Date: 19 October 2011

Reviewer: Frank Popham

Reviewer's report:

The authors have done a good job of responding to the reviewers' comments and the paper is now much clearer. I have a few additional comments.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) As far as I can tell the discussion lacks a detailed reflection on the limitations of the paper - this should be added (for example a lack of an objective source to check at the individual level the answers given by respondents). Additionally it would help future researchers using such an approach in a postal questionnaire to have a reflection in the discussion on how the questions may be improved or not.

2) The analysis section is clearly divided into sections and subsections highlighting each stage - however this format was not replicated in the results making it harder for the reader to connect the two. Could the results be presented using the same sections as in the analysis section?

3) The conclusion (in both abstract and paper) is too strong and implies to me that the authors validated responses using an external source at the individual level. It needs to be more cautious.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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