Reviewer's report

Title: How many mailouts? could attempts to increase the response rate in the Iraq war cohort study be counter-productive?

Version: 1 Date: 28 July 2007

Reviewer: Timothy P Johnson

Reviewer's report:

General
The author(s) are to be commended for addressing an important issue related to nonresponse error: the degree to which nonresponse follow-up efforts may help, or in this case, actually hinder attempts to improve the precision of survey estimates. Also important is their general conclusion that errors of survey reporting may be of greater concern than nonresponse bias, at least within the context within which this survey was conducted. This work shows the direction that future efforts to understand the relative sources of survey error in epidemiologic research should follow. Thank you for the opportunity to review it and apologies for being late in returning my review.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
I would encourage the author(s) to think about the degree to which one of both of their misclassification measures may have itself been biased by respondent behaviors, particularly acquiescent response styles.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
The paper could be considerably sharpened by turning it over to a good copy editor.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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