Reviewer's report

Title: Towards socially inclusive research: an evaluation of telephone questionnaire administration in a multilingual population

Version: 1 Date: 5 September 2007

Reviewer: Ann M Geiger

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. The description of the variables and interest and analyses must be expanded. How was the determination made that women do or do not speak English? Is it "Speak English" as shown in the tables, or should it be "Speak English as a First Language"? The latter seems more appropriate, and this change needs to be made throughout the manuscript. What approach was used to calculate a confidence interval around the response rates?

2. The costs results on page 8 come as somewhat of a surprise, and seem tangential to the rest of the manuscript. No mention is made of these results in the Abstract or Methods. Cost is mentioned briefly at the end of the Introduction, but the implication of that mention could be read to include more than what is presented in the Results (i.e., the cost of soliciting a preference from participants). The cost material should either be integrated more fully into the manuscript or dropped. The current material seems rather obvious, that telephone questionnaires cost more, so the authors should consider that in their revision.

3. There appears to be an opportunity to expand the literature review. There is an extensive literature on modes of administering questionnaires, the relative pros and cons of mailed versus telephone, etc. This behavioral science literature could be more fully represented in the Discussion.

4. The manuscript could potentially make a clearer distinction, or at least speculate, about the independent contributions of giving participants a choice of modality and different modalities in improving response rate. From the conclusion on page 12 it appears the author attribute the improved response rate solely to the different modalities, when it is quite possible that engaging participants with a choice also contributed to the improved response rate.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of
5. The Methods, page 6, are substantially redundant with regard to the Setting and Participants. Please streamline the presentation here, likely by providing general information under Setting and specific counts and details under Participants.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

6. Self-administered questionnaires would seem like a more standard terminology than self completion questionnaires, at least in the United States. Please consider shifting the terminology if such a shift seems appropriate.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.