Reviewer's report

Title: Self-assessed health among Thai Elderly

Version: 1 Date: 20 January 2010

Reviewer: Marja Jylha

Reviewer's report:

This straightforward study on self-rated health and its associates in a large population sample in older adults in Thailand. The basic design of the study, the analyses, and the organization of the paper are clear and appropriate. Still, there are some questions that I believe need to be addressed before the decision should be reached about publication; they are not very big but would essentially improve the paper.

Major comments

1. The sampling units were blocks and households, not individuals. Therefore response rate can not be given, but is there any information on how many households were reached and in how many the members agreed to participate?

2. On p 7 ADL and IADL measures are described but in the categorization of the "composite" indicator only ADLs are mentioned. Does the measure still include both ADLs and IADLs?

3. In the Discussion, the authors seem to miss the difference between crude (non-adjusted) and the adjusted self-rated health. As a crude measure, self-rated health reflects everything that the respondent considers belonging to his or her health, but in the multivariate models the adjusted figures reflect the association not explained by the other health and other variables included into the model. The association of sex with self-rated health is a good example. Table 2 shows that women did have a worse self-rated health than men. In the multivariate model the association was no more significant, probably because women also had more chronic conditions and more disability, the probable reason why they did assess their health worse, and then this effect was taken into account in the model. Crude and adjusted SRHs are not comparable. For the Discussion, particularly on age and gender, the authors might benefit from a recent review by Jylha M. on "What is self-rated health and why does it predict mortality" in Social Science and Medicine, 2009.

4. Not clear what is meant by the sentence "Though this reliability... on p.12 line4-7.

Minor comments:

1. Please show or report in text the whole distribution of the SRH measure, even
if it is used as dichotomized in the analyses.

2. On p 3 the reference to Johnson & Fredricc 1999 should be Johnson & Wolinsky

3. Please delete discussion that is not relevant to this topic, e.g. on living conditions on p. 4 lines 19-22

4 Please check the English language.

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

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.