Author’s response to reviews

Title: The influences of childlessness on the psychological well-being and social network of the oldest old

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed the manuscript: “The influences of childlessness on the psychological well-being and social network of the oldest old” by Josefin Vikström, Marie Bladh, Mats Hammar, Jan Marcusson, Ewa Wressle and Gunilla Sydsjö which we believe would be of interest to Your readers.

The study is meant to contribute to the knowledge of how childlessness influences the psychological well-being of men and women as they grow old. The study is based on data from the ELSA85 population study on 496 Swedish 85-yearold individuals.

Many of the previous studies on this topic have excluded those who are “elderly elderly” and those who live in institutions. The aim of our study is to investigate if these individuals, who are older and frailer than the individuals included in previous studies, suffer more from not having had children since they generally are more dependent on their close relatives for support and care.

We have received the associate editors’s comments and the additional editorial requirements and have adjusted the manuscript accordingly. Please view the list of changes made below. We hope that the manuscript now meets the requirements of Your journal.

Looking forward to Your decision concerning publication of the above mentioned manuscript.

Regards,

Ms Josefin Vikström

- Could you indicate how outcome measures were dichotomised? What was the number of subjects for each of these variables?
  - A description of how these measures were dichotomised can be found in the methods section under the subheading “Procedure” section 4 line 2-6, section 6 line 7-9 and section 7 line 7-10.
  - The number of subjects for these variables can be found in the Results section section 5, line 7-8, section 6 line 7-8 and section 7 line 2-3.
- Could you explain how some confounders with multiple outcomes were analysed? For example, marital status is coded as widowed, married and unmarried; were these variables coded as dummy’s? In case multiple dummy’s were used, it recommended to dichotomise variables in order to reduce the number of variables in the multivariate analyses.
  - In the logistic regression analyses, dummy variables were not used.
- The figure was included in the manuscript file.
• This has been corrected.
  • Figure cropping.
    o The figure has been cropped.
  • Structure
    o We have adapted the manuscript structure according to the instructions for authors’ page. If the manuscript still is not adequately adapted, do not hesitate to contact us with the required changes.