Author's response to reviews

Title: Perceived economic situation, but not educational level, is associated with disability prevalence in the Spanish elderly: observational study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
COVER LETTER:

Thank you very much for the acceptance of our paper and for the new comments. We proceed to answer them point by point:

1. I still do not think it is appropriate to add ?80 and over? as a keyword in that this study does not focus on the oldest-old. If the authors insist to do so, please change ?80 and over? to ?oldest-old?.

*We agree to drop the keyword.*

2. It is unclear to me that why disposition was not included in the full model. The inclusion of this variable will not violate the 10 EPV rule (you can include 7-8 variables in the model if No of events is 77, according the 10 EPV rule.). Indeed, studies have shown that the 5-9 EPV rule would not be bias the results very much (e.g., Vittinghoff and McCulloch, Am J Epidemiol 2007;165:710?71).

*Thank you very much for the reference provided that we have revised with great interest.*

As can be seen in Tables 2 and 3, disposition is added to the full multivariable model in the case of making ends meet and to the reduced model (without education) in the case of self-perceived economic situations (fifth columns of both tables). We have explained this with more detail in the methodology.

3. Related to the second, I suggest the authors perform additional analyses that include a couple of behavioral variables in the model as Appendix to test the robustness of their findings.

*Following the recommendations of the paper provided, we have added two behavioral variables like alcohol and tobacco consumption, because they are important health related habits and questions related to them were answered by most of the interviewees. We commented on the results obtained. We tried an interaction term between age and socioeconomic variables also. It must be borne in mind that variables in Vittinghoff’s paper include dummy variables, so we consider risky to introduce more habits. We prefer not to present the results of these adjustments in an appendix, so that all the information is readily available to the reader. This can be changed to the editors’ discretion.*

4. There are some responses by the authors to Professor Feng’s third comment, but it is unclear how they revised their text accordingly.

*The analyses were redone to adjust the models for a variable of psychological disposition that could be mediating a reverse pathway between disability and self-perceived economic situation (disability worsens disposition which, in turn, worsens the self-appreciation of the economic circumstances). The adjustment did not eliminate the significant association of the economic*
variables, what discards to some extent this source of reverse causality, as other authors have found before. This has been highlighted in the text with a new sentence in page 13.

5. Even if the manuscript is edited by a translator, it still suffers from many errors. I suggest the paper should be thoroughly edited by a native English speaker who has at least some knowledge in research of aging.

The paper was revised by a native speaker who has experience in translating and revising scientific papers on aging. Although we consider that the paper had an English level good enough for an international audience, we have asked the reviewer to go over it again. We expect the reviewer likes this version more.

The authors.

21st of March, 2014