Reviewer’s report

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

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Reviewer: Qiushi Feng

Reviewer’s report:

The topic is important and the findings are interesting, but I have a few concerns before I could recommend for publication. My comments are listed as below.

1) The use of subjective economic status instead of actual income is valuable, and the authors indeed pointed out some advantages of this measure; however such self-reporting of economic situation also brings in factors which are not directly related to economic situations of the elderly. For example, reference group chosen to make the comparative judgment of the economic situation is not stable and could vary among individuals. Moreover, as the author pointed out, the psychological factors also matter in the self-reporting. If so, whether such a subjective measurement could indicate the true economic situation in a more accurate way was not for sure, and the authors needs to be more conservative in their support for the subjective measures. Additionally, another related measurement, “difficulty in making ends meet”, was not justified in the introduction and appeared quite confusing for readers.

2) From the manuscript, it seems that the authors only focused on the “disability starting in old age” (p5), and because of this, the authors dropped those whose disability started before 50s. However there is no clue in the measurement of disability about such a time requirement.

3) To rule out the reverse causality, the authors only used cases with “fixed” job income before disability; however it seems not an effective strategy. The current subjective economic status could still be affected by incidence of disability even though the job income is fixed before disability.

4) The modeling strategy are not fully justified. For example, what is the purpose to run binary regressions before the multivariate analysis? In addition, some results such as the figures appear redundant without clear justification, because the major patterns have been shown in the regression models. Are there any specific reasons to represent the same results in figures?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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