**Reviewer's report**

**Title:** Do social networks affect the use of residential aged care among older Australians?

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 27 June 2007

**Reviewer:** Joseph E Gaugler

**Reviewer's report:**

**General**
I thought this was a strong paper that examined the effects of social networks on residential long-term care utilization. I do recommend that a statistician review the analysis plan.

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

1. 2nd paragraph, introduction: Include the systematic review of Miller, Weissert et al., 2000 on predictors of nursing home admission, as well as our new meta-analysis of predictors of nursing home admission in BMC Geriatrics (Gaugler, Duval, Anderson, & Kane, 2007: BMC Geriatrics).

2. Discuss the implications of the length of follow-up in your analysis, particularly when compared to other studies. An 8-year follow-up period is considerably longer when compared to other analyses of residential long-term care use.

3. P. 11: Discuss the potential for loss to follow-up bias in the sample composition. Discuss how these effects were addressed in the analysis.

4. p. 15, last paragraph: Incorporate some discussion of issues related to targeting and screening of persons at-risk for institutionalization.

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**Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)**

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**Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)**

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

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests.