Reviewer’s report

Title: Conceptualizing childhood health problems using survey data: A comparison of key indicators

Version: 1 Date: 12 March 2007

Reviewer: Marji Erickson Warfield

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Conceptualizing childhood health problems using survey data:
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Review

Overall, this is an interesting and useful paper.

Discretionary Revisions

1. On page 4, correct the spelling of policy-‘centred.’
2. On page 10, change the first sentence in the second paragraph to read ‘four of the five’ criteria of the CSHCN Screener.
3. On page 14, a brief description of the term ‘bootstrapped’ would be helpful.
4. On page 25, change “Children that had only a Chronic” to “Children who had only a Chronic.”

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Another way to show the groups in the Venn diagram is needed since the different colors are unlikely to show up.
2. More should be said about the many differences between the Severe Health Difficulty group and the other groups in Table 2.
3. Add to the discussion some suggestions for future research using different data sets and the possibility of examining data from other countries.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Effect sizes need to be calculated for the findings presented in Tables 1 through 3. These will enable the reader to more accurately interpret the findings.
2. More description of the actual percentages is needed in the text when significant differences are found. For example, on page 14, although it is true that compared to healthy children, children with health problems were more likely to be male (54.90% vs. 47.06%), to have been born in Canada (95.99% vs. 93.19%), and to come from single-parent families (81.75% vs. 86.20%), the differences in the percentages are small and of questionable meaning. But, the reader does not get that information unless he/she looks at the table.
3. Analyses should be conducted by age category rather than just by mean age. The significant differences by age on Tables 2 and 3 show small differences in mean age whereas differences by age category may be more useful in interpreting why the differences exist.

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

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.