Reviewer’s report

Title: The role of Basic Health Insurance on Depression: An Epidemiological Cohort Study of a randomized Community Sample in Northwest China

Version: 2 Date: 16 November 2011

Reviewer: C Liu

Reviewer’s report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

The following questions have to be addressed before a decision on publication can be reached:

1. More than half of the total respondents in the baseline didn’t participate in the second follow-up. And those respondents not included in the follow-ups were reported to be younger, more female, less Dibao families, and less likely to have health insurance. The authors should explain how they have handled the missing data, and discuss whether these statistically differences between the respondents and non-respondents have any impact on their findings and interpretation of the results.

2. CES-D is a screening scale instead of a clinical diagnostic tool for depression; and therefore it’s not appropriate to say some of your respondents had clinically significant depressive symptoms (pp.14-15).

3. The discussion of the relationship between health insurance and depression is not comprehensive and accurate. Table 3 and 4 show that there were 45%~57% increase in the chance of developing depression among those respondents who had no insurance in baseline but having insurance in follow-up. This clearly indicates that having health insurance, after adjusting other confounding variables, can also be a predictor of developing depression over time. In other words, the impact of change in health insurance over time on depression wasn’t well addressed in the article.

4. All the OR values for CES-D baseline are less than 1 in Table 4. In other words, those respondents who had depressive illness (CES-D score >=16) had about 60%~70% reduction in the chance of developing depression over time. However, these findings and their implications to the study weren’t clearly discussed.
5. The discussion on the role of health insurance on depression was not detail and deep, and the implications of findings to policy and practice were not mentioned.

**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 that I have no competing interests