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:** 3  **Date:** 18 March 2012

**Reviewer:** Juan Li

**Reviewer's report:**

I am ok now with the authors’ answer to my question that poverty maybe a confounding factor to the observed relationship between depression and BHIC.

BUT I have to say that I am not content with their response to my concern on their hypothesis which is why they hypothesized that BHIC may be a protective factor of depression, since the author stated in their cover letter that they do not assume that Chinese actually have more somatic problems. In other words, I wonder what on earth is the logic between the “characteristic of Chinese somatic expression of depression” and “BHIC may be a protective factor of depression” (stated at the bottom part of the first paragraph at page 5)?

A related question is that I cannot understand the second reason they proposed in the discussion part to explain the influence of insurance on reducing depression. What the author mentioned is true that “beginning in the non-psychiatric departments and ending with psychiatric attention”, but how can this be a reason to explain the relationship between BHIC and depression?

Rather, it looks to me that the paper simply explored an interesting question whether having insurance would reduce depression symptoms in China which may be of significant implications to policy and practice. The findings could be different from (indeed different as the data showed) what seen in some western countries. But why different is not the focus of the study, I think, though it would be idea if authors could list some in the introduction part to give enough reasons to explore this have-been-studied-issue (in western countries) with Chinese sample. But anyhow, I cannot follow that the characteristic of Chinese somatic expression of depression plays a significant role here.

**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