Reviewer's report

Title: Service Suspension for Mental Disorders in Armed Forces Draftees in the Penghu Area

Version: 2 Date: 5 June 2011

Reviewer: Abigail Wilson

Reviewer's report:

Dear Authors,

You have clearly put a lot of time into this work and as a result it is much improved. Two of my comments still need to be addressed, however, for me to feel comfortable giving acceptance.

4.) Methods, first paragraph: Were the controls randomly selected? This needs to be stated.

Author's reply: The control group (CG) consisted of 152 draftees who were matched from the same draft round and serving in the same units as the study group. The participants were selected by the unit. This is stated.

I believe here that you misinterpreted my question. I understand that the controls were selected from the same pool as the cases, but how was the matching done? Was it random? "The participants were selected by the unit" sounds like they could have been hand-picked, therefore adding bias to your study.

7.) Results, general: All analyses conducted were univariate. Multivariate would allow you to assess the effects of diagnoses and Basic Data Survey variables together.

Author's reply: The purpose of this study was to determine the characteristics of these service suspended draftees in order to screen out the draftees at risk for mental disorders before or at an early stage of military service. In addition, the actual causes of mental disorder might be very diverse among the patients, and the tense environment in a high readiness military zone may be only one of the causes. Our objective was not to investigate the actual cause of mental disorder and identify the risk factors or predictors of mental disorder. Therefore, multivariate analysis was not performed in this study.

Your stated purpose is "to screen out the draftees at risk for mental disorders"; therefore, by definition you need to identify the risk factors for mental disorders.

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.