Reviewer's report

Title: Educational Aspirations add to the Social Reproduction of Health Inequalities in Adolescents.

Version: 1 Date: 18 September 2009

Reviewer: Bettina Piko

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions:

Reviewer's comments

The paper aims to analyze the role of educational aspirations in the reproduction of health inequalities among adolescents. The paper is interesting and would have important implications for better understanding social inequalities in this age group. Some of the points of the paper, however, would improve the quality of the paper. Particularly, the clarification of the concept. I would encourage the authors to consider the following:

1., Title: As the text suggest, the authors use several school-related variables that do not exactly or mainly cover the concept of educational aspirations. Partly they add future prospect to continue education but ‘educational aspiration’ may instead has a meaning of liking studying and the importance of educational achievement for the student. Therefore, the authors should change the tile for a better one that reflects the main school-related variables studied. In addition, ‘reproduction’ of social inequalities may be justified using only longitudinal study design. The title suggests a longitudinal study but this is not the case. We indeed assume that educational factors may contribute to the reproduction of the social inequalities in health, however, it would be a misdirection for the readers to keep this term.

2., Introduction: Substantial, but again, more attention should be paid on the concept used – whether educational aspirations or something else are in the focus of the study. At the end of the Introduction, some hypotheses would be useful to discuss the results later.

3., We need more information about the procedure of the data collection, sample selection.

4., Table 2: describing ORs, it is more advantageous to use the reference categories first.

5., Discussion, some restructuring and rewriting are needed in light of the previous suggestions

All in all, the paper would provide important contribution to the ‘inequalities in adolescent health’ debate.
Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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