Reviewer’s report

Title: The psychometric properties of three self-report screening instruments for identifying frail older people in the community

Version: 1 Date: 2 November 2009

Reviewer: Catherine Sherrington

Reviewer’s report:

General comments

This is a well-written manuscript addressing an increasingly important public health problem.

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

1. I suggest the results in the abstract be reported in the order which they appear in the methods section of the abstract.

2. To assist the reader to assess the generalisability of the frailty prevalence estimates, the demographics of the study sample could be compared with those from population-based studies in the study area.

3. To assist the reader to interpret the results, an indication of what is generally considered to be acceptable Cohen’s Kappa or Cronbach’s alpha coefficients could be added.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

None

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. I feel that there should be more discussion of the definition of frailty and its relationship with disability and co-morbidity. Some authors (such as Fried, reference 4 in the manuscript) consider these to be separate but overlapping concepts. The items in the frailty scales assessed and the decision to compare the frailty scales with a measure of activity restriction imply that the manuscript’s authors do not share this view. This should be clarified in the manuscript.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.