Reviewer's report

Title: What Causes the Disability of Farm Population? Evidence from the National Farmers' Health Insurance Data in Taiwan

Version: 1 Date: 25 May 2010

Reviewer: Robert Meyer

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. The data presented do not add much to the field of study, in that as farmers age -- their potential for receiving disability payments increases. On page 9, it is stated that the "The FHI Standard for the Disability Payment" included 10 types and 160 items of disability, each corresponding to a level of disability. IF the authors would have included this information in their analysis then the work will have more value to the field of study -- namely that the types and severity of disability by age group of farmers could be reported. The conclusion states (page 15) that "the natural causes related to age structure is the driving factors of the disability incidence among FHI insurants in Taiwan." I don't think that claim can be substantiated based on the information given since a age matched set of non-farmers was not presented as comparison. Also, type of disability reported would lend support to this statement if it were presented.

2. The reference group -- hired worker -- may not represent the same level of risk as a farm owner. More information would need to be presented to understand the social and occupational roles and tasks of Taiwanese farm operators as they progress through life.

3. The title is not supported in the manuscript. "What causes the disability of Farm Population? Evidence from the National Farmers' Health Insurance Data in Taiwan." As mentioned previously, the data presented does not state cause of disability, only that disability payments tend to increase as the population ages. No causal factors are discussed.

4. Quality of written English language needs to be addressed before re-submitting.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests related to this publication.