Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of Disability among Elderly People in Spain: A Screening Survey based on the International Classification of Functioning

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Reviewer: Somnath Chatterji

Reviewer's report:

The paper is an interesting description of the prevalence of disability among older adults across a set of locations in Spain.

There are several clarifications that are needed before the paper can be accepted.

In the background section, the authors cite the National Survey on Disability, Impairments and Health of INE and state that 95% of individuals with disability were over age 65! If this is indeed true, there must be reasons either in the methodology or definition that has contributed to these proportions. A comment about this is warranted. Also, the authors state that they accounted for ‘33% of the population within that age range’. This latter statement is unclear: does it mean that 33% of those over age 65 were disabled as identified in this survey?

In the methods section, the authors do not state clearly if they used the standard WHO approach to scoring the WHODAS full version or did they just sum across all items. For domain 5 of the WHODAS, the scoring section allows separate scoring for the household and work related items. Was this implemented?

The authors say they used the European standard population. It is unclear why they needed to age standardise the results and if they can justify that why they did not use the Spanish population estimates from INE rather than a European standard population.

In the discussion section, the authors state that the prevalence of disability was 64% as compared to 46% in the national survey. But, as note earlier, in the introduction the reader gets the impression that the latter figure was 33%. This needs clarification.

In Table 2, the labels for n and % have been reversed.

The authors need to comment on the fact that 106 of 546 respondents 75 years and older reported NO difficulty (not even mild) on ANY of the 12 WHODAS12 items. This would seem rather surprising based on other experiences of the use of the same instrument.

The authors also need to comment if the baseline characteristics from the original epidemiological study of the non-respondents were in any way different from those who were traced and interviewed for this study.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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 declare that I have no competing interests'