Reviewer's report

Title: Social participation reduces depressive symptoms among older adults: An 18-year longitudinal analysis in Taiwan

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Reviewer: Barbara Horner

Reviewer's report:

Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
While the manuscript does not pose a research question, it is clear that the researcher seeks to determine the relationship between social participation and psychological distress among a nationally representative sample of older adults from Taiwan aged 60-64.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The methods are appropriate and well described in this manuscript in reference to the quantitative data. However, the study refers to 'interviewing participants' several times in the abstract (background) and then there is no further reference to this data. I think it needs to be described - how were the interviews conducted and where, where they transcribed and analysed and if so how. The study implies a large amount of qualitative data was collected, or where the interviews just to facilitate completion the forms?

3. Are the data sound?
The quantitative data appears sound. As above, was there qualitative data?

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
The discussion and conclusions are well balanced. the only comment I make is perhaps semantic but I believe worth considering. This manuscript refers to 'depression' in the title and throughout the manuscript up to the conclusion, where it refers to 'distress among older members of the Taiwanese population' rather than depression. I think this is likely to be a typographical error but I think it should be corrected - depression and distress are not the same.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Yes

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Yes
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable?
The manuscript is well written.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I have no competing interests