Reviewer's report

Title: The effect of housing on the mental health of older people: the impact of lifetime housing history in Whitehall II

Version: 1 Date: 3 May 2011

Reviewer: Howard Meltzer

Reviewer's report:

This is a very straightforward paper. The relationship between housing tenure, housing conditions, financial insecurity and mental health is well-known. The strength of the paper lies in the use of longitudinal data in the context of health inequalities. The Whitehall II dataset is still a valuable asset despite its limitations in distributions of socioeconomic status and locality.

Minor essential revisions


2. Please consider omitting the sentence; "Future studies of the relative impact of housing tenure and housing quality would be strengthened by having independent measures of housing quality". In my view this would not be the case. All the studies on social capital indicate that it is the perception of structural factors which are relevant to mental health as distinct from the structural factors per se.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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'