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: 3 Date: 27 June 2011

Reviewer: Sally McManus

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential revision

Discussion para 5

RE "While self-perceptions are generally powerful predictors of health, self-perceptions of housing quality are non-specific and...'

Self-perceptions of housing quality are not necessarily non-specific. Rather the self-perception of housing quality question used in this analysis - 'to what extent do you have problems with your housing' - is non-specific (e.g. other studies have found different levels of effect for cold homes vs. damp homes, using self-report measures). Could this line be rephrased along the lines of:

"While self-perceptions are generally powerful predictors of health, the self-perception of housing quality question used in this analysis was non-specific...".

Otherwise, I was happy with the revised paper.

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 declare that I have no competing interests.