Reviewer's report

Title: Family functioning and parenting factors as mediators of the relationship between the ethnic minority status and child problem behaviour: the Generation R Study

Version: 1 Date: 10 September 2012

Reviewer: Harriet Hiscock

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential revisions.

1. In the Results section of the Abstract, can you present the adj ORs and 95% CIs for soci-economic factors and family functioning/parenting factors in addition to the % attenuation as this will be easier for the reader to interpret.

2. In the Introduction, please state your hypotheses.

3. Did the sample differ from those excluded on missing ethnic background data (n=525) and different ethnic backgrounds (n= 559) with respect to socioeconomic status? If yes, can you say how this may have affected your results?

4. On page 7, please state what the family income classification was for ie for 1 week, 1 month?

5. On page 8, can you explain how you derived imputed values as "based on the relationships between all the covariates included in this study" is a bit vague.

6. The first steps taken in the Baron and Kenny model need some further explanation, eg "In order to identify 'true' mediators we conducted regression models to test the association between maternal ethnic background and family functioning and parenting factors and then logistic regression models to determine the association between family functioning and parenting factors and CBCL Total Problems.....True mediators were those factors that...." I had to re-read this section a few times to understand the rationale for the first two sets of regressions.

7. In the Discussion, pge 12, you say that a strength is the independent report from mothers and fathers. However, they may have completed the questionnaires together (thereby leading to similar outcomes in your regressions) so the word 'independent' should be removed.

8. You measured harsh parenting at child age 18 months which is likely to be a proxy for child behaviour (not measured) at 18 months. This early behaviour in turn is likely to be a very strong risk factor for child behaviour at 3 years. This should be mentioned in your Discussion.

9. In Figure 1, it would make more sense if the arrows go in the other direction ie
towards the boxes, to better represent flow of families out of the study sample.

**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