Reviewer’s report

Title: Multimorbidity prevalence and patterns across socioeconomic determinants: a cross-sectional survey

Version: 1 Date: 9 November 2011

Reviewer: Stewart Mercer

Reviewer’s report:

This is an excellent paper which requires a few major changes. It is an important topic, and adds new knowledge about the prevalence of multimorbidity.

In the methods, the authors do not state how they actually did the analysis to identify common pairs, triad, etc of conditions. This information should be added.

There were 5010 respondents but out of how many calls? Were repeat calls made to people who did not answer, and if so, how many? What times of the day were calls made, and what days of the week? Although the results have been weighted to match the province demographics, it is still possible that important groups were under sampled. There should be more explanation of this, and consideration of this in the discussion.

The authors do not state on what basis the 14 conditions were initially chosen. This should be made clear. I am concerned about having chronic pain and arthritis as separate diseases. Although not all chronic pain is due to arthritis, most arthritis causes chronic pain. It’s no surprise that in the results these come out as the top pair. For me, this is really double-counting the same thing. There either needs to be discussion of this in the discussion, or the data re-analysed counting these as a single condition.

The paper by Mercer and Watt 2007 in Annals of Family Medicine should be quoted as it shows the relationship between poverty and multimorbidity, and also the relationship between multimorbidity and mental health in poor versus rich areas.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests