Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 4 January 2012

Reviewer: Bruce Guthrie

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for asking me to re-review this paper. The authors have responded appropriately to the major revisions I suggested, and to most of the others.

Minor essential revisions

1. The authors say that the population nature of their dataset is a key strength (which it is), but that needs qualifying in two ways. First, I had asked that they comment on the generalisability of the study to populations outside Alberta, but I can't see that this has been addressed. I think this mainly relates to the age structure of the Albertan population, and how this might vary across different countries. For what it's worth, ~20% of the UK population is aged 65 and over compared to 15% of their sample, which means that the finding that 70% of multimorbidity occurs in people aged 65 or less would likely be less striking in other countries (still likely to be the majority, but probably more finely balanced). I would like to see the authors comment on this issue explicitly. Second (and not mentioned by me first time round), the authors should avoid claiming that they have a general population survey or provide a general population estimate of the prevalence of multimorbidity, because they have only surveyed adults. The easiest way to address that would be to simply say 'general adult population', 'adult population survey' etc throughout.

2. I still don't understand the distinction between 'college' and 'university' education, and that these words have different meanings in different countries. I presume 'college' means 'post-High School further education but not at a university or not leading to a university degree', but the authors should ideally add such a definition to the methods.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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

Declaration of competing interests:
No to the first 4, but a potential non-financial competing interest: I currently am a co-applicant on a grant developing an intervention to improve quality of life in people with multimorbidity in deprived areas, and as part of this have carried out some descriptive epidemiology of multimorbidity using routine clinical data with a paper in the late stages of preparation.