Reviewer's report

Title: Psychosocial factors associated with becoming a young father in Finland: a nationwide longitudinal study

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Reviewer: Krishna Upadhya

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Psychosocial factors associated with becoming a young father in Finland: a nationwide longitudinal study

The aim of this study as clearly stated in the manuscript is to “examine the associations of psychosocial factors in childhood with becoming a young father, and to assess if they are independent of criminal behavior in adolescence.” The manuscript addresses an important and understudied area of inquiry- that of early fatherhood. The study also utilizes an important source of data which is unique in its longitudinal component as well as its population based sample.

Additional strengths of the manuscript include detailed discussion of the reason for choosing the cutoff age for “young parenting” including information about the cultural context. There are other such examples in the manuscript that indicate thoughtful planning went into the study.

The main critique I have of the manuscript is that it does not utilize the longitudinal data in the richest way. The logistic regression analysis done helps shed light on independent associations between the childhood and adolescent factors and young fatherhood, but it seems that the data could be used to show trajectories given that different time points are represented in the data. The current analysis puts the child and adolescent time points together and doesn’t allow any inference about effects of time between these two points. The conclusion, for example, references the idea of “identification of different patterns of early parenting.” I wonder why this study did not consider using analytic techniques to study trajectories of the participants, given the longitudinal data, which might actually empirically suggest the “different patterns of early parenting.” Such an analysis would better utilize the data source and provide an even more significant contribution to the existing literature.

Additional suggestions to improve this manuscript are included below:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. An additional table should be included to demonstrate the distribution of predictor variables at baseline in the sample.

2. The methods section indicates that information about becoming a father was available for 92% of the baseline participants. An analysis should be done to determine how or if those participants who were not included in the follow up may have differed on baseline characteristics from those who were included in the
follow-up. This information should be presented in the paper.

3. The methods section also indicates that the sample was initially drawn from the total population of Finnish children and that the sample was nationally representative. The analysis, however, does not indicate that any weighting of analyses were done to account for sampling strategy. This lack of weighting may be appropriate since the manuscript does not seek to provide national estimates, however some additional explanation of the sampling strategy used for the initial study and reasons for not using sample weights should be provided.

4. The results section should include the univariable association found between the adolescent criminality variable and the outcome.

Minor Essential Revisions

The manuscript outlines previous research and states an explicit research question. The choice of study design and analytic approach could be better explained by the inclusion of a conceptual model.

Discretionary Revisions

**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.