Reviewer’s report

Title: Main income sources and activities in people with self-reported hearing difficulties; a cross-sectional population-based study in Sweden

Version: 2 Date: 29 June 2012

Reviewer: Elizabeth Masterson

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting paper which adds value to the field. Thank you for the opportunity to review.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1) The title would be improved by substituting something like "socio-economic status" for "activities". SES is the second major variable in the paper and it would assist researchers performing title searches. The term "activities" also seems to indicate something quite different (e.g., leisure activities, hobbies, lifestyle factors) than what the study variable contains.

2) Please indicate the minimum amount of work needed for an individual to be assigned to category A (work).

3) In the Methods and Materials section, it isn’t clear to the reader why Social Insurance and Financial Aid are relevant until after reading the Factors Included in the Analysis section. One sentence, perhaps after the first sentence in the Materials and Methods section, would help the reader make the connection.

4) The models are first mentioned in the text in the Results section. Please introduce what these models are in the Materials and Methods section.

5) Please clarify the last sentence in the third paragraph of the Discussion. What are the societal consequences of hearing impairment to which you refer? The term “discredited” has a very different meaning than what I assume the authors intend. Please use “disadvantaged” or something similar.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1) In the Introduction, the acronym ULF/SILC is not fully spelled out for readers.

2) The second sentence under Study Population and Data needs to be shortened or broken up into two sentences for clarity (difficult to read). A "were" is also missing before "not on early old-age...."

3) An "s" is needed at the end of the first sentence under Statistical analyses.

4) The word "analyses" in the title Statistical Analyses should be capitalized.

5) The "were" in the second sentence under Self-Reported Hearing Difficulties as
Outcome should be "was".

6) The last paragraph in the Sickness Benefits/Disability > 6 Months as Outcome section, 1st sentence: Please begin with "Full factorial..." and the "is" should be an "are".

7) Please change instances of "without or with" to "with or without".

8) Please substitute “normal-hearing counterparts” or some other term for “normal-hearing likes” in the first and second paragraphs in the Discussion section and Conclusion.

9) The semi-colon in the last sentence of the Discussion section should be a period.

10) Table 1 has a typo. Under Men, All, % within variable: variable is misspelled. Discretionary Revisions:

1) Can Figure 2 be simplified somehow? It is not easily absorbed.

2) The names for each variable are very long, and at times it is distracting from the main points. Please consider identifying what they mean once, and then substituting something shorter (e.g., disability, unemployment, etc.)

**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:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.