Reviewer's report

Title: Cross-Sectional Survey to Develop a Scale of Community Commitment for Preventing Social Isolation in Older People

Version: 1 Date: 9 August 2012

Reviewer: cynthia stuhlmiller

Reviewer's report:

Overall from the paper title, the research described in this paper would seem like a straightforward useful approach and contribution to developing and testing a “Scale of Community Commitment for Preventing Social Isolation in Older People” using a Japanese population. However the authors claim to have conducted a confirmatory analysis which is one step beyond what I believe they have done which is an exploratory analysis. However the approach and analysis is out of my depth of understanding so it should be further reviewed by a tool design expert. Herein are my preliminary views that can be confirmed or discarded by reviewers versed in exploratory and confirmatory analysis. Please use my remarks as questions rather than based on specific expertise required for a proper review.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?

The title of the article suggests that a survey was conducted to develop a scale. However when reading further, the survey is intended to confirm prior work. This might be noted in the title.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

The methods described for previous pilot work seem appropriate. The methods described for the work of this paper “confirmatory analysis” do not seem to match what was actually done. It would appear that the authors conducted a second item reduction exploratory factor analysis as you would expect to do after pilot work. So it is not clear how this work is confirmatory. Perhaps this could be made clearer or explained.

3. Are the data sound? The data are likely sound if it is aligned with the appropriate methods intended. It would be useful to provide levels of significance in both text and tables. It would be good for authors to provide some explanation of skewness and kurtosis to demonstrate their understanding of why they believe what they are reporting is important. What did they hope to achieve from these tests and what did they indicate?

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? I suppose so but for the methods claimed to be used, additional tables such as a path diagram and correlations matrix would have been expected.
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? The paper could be greatly enhanced by providing some discussion of the merits of the exercise and better linking between the results of the study, significance, and how the scale can be used. Were there any cultural distinctions noted?

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes, the work is built on previous.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? I am not sure but the title suggests tool development while the body of the text suggest it is a confirmatory process which I believe to be different.

   The paper reads more like a standard item reduction analysis which seems more exploratory than confirmatory.

9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests.