Reviewer's report

Title: Socio-demographic factors and psychological distress in Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian adults aged 18-64 years: analysis of national survey data

Version: 4 Date: 21 November 2011

Reviewer: Noriko Cable

Reviewer's report:

Authors made large change in their texts, but very small points were missed. I recommend minor essential revisions to the revised manuscript.

Methods:
Other reviewer mentioned use of 5 items out of the K-10 in the NHS data. This was to be compatible with the other study (NATSIHS). It is reasonable to do so; however, authors need to run sensitive analysis and discuss their findings in writing. Participants’ response to a question is related to how they read and responded to the preceding questions; therefore selecting some questions out of the original set of questions is less likely to produce compatible results. (i.e. comparing indigenous people from the NHS against the indigenous people from the NATSIHS) If additional analysis is impossible, authors at least can acknowledge as weakness.

As for using separate weights for each population, not each dataset, authors need to explain in the method section what implications are to apply these weights. Is this to make both findings comparable? If so, authors could calculate RRls by taking ORs from indigenous and non-indigenous. Failing to do so, ethnic differences in VHPD and SES measure may not be significant at all.

Please include a proper reference for svr as follows:

Results:
Figures 1 & 2: those should be in tables with exact numbers and p-values/95% confidence intervals

Discussion:
Authors cited other work that existing physical illnesses were associated with poor psychological health. Although only 1/3 of VHPD indigenous people acknowledged their poor physical health conditions are ‘the cause’ of their mood,
authors could not refuse the association. Responses to the questions (‘cause’, ‘psychological’) may be cultural. Their findings indicate existing poor physical health is likely to be a confounder in their study which was not adjusted. They could easily acknowledge this using their cited references.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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.