Reviewer's report

Title: Group involvement and self-rated health status among the Japanese elderly: an examination of bonding and bridging social capital

Version: 2 Date: 11 November 2013

Reviewer: Hiroshi Murayama

Reviewer's report:

Authors could address my concerns, but there are some points which are still vague.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Page 6, lines 20-21 (and other parts): “bonding and bridging community social capital”…This usage may make the readers confused, because this looks like “community-level bonding and bridging social capital”. In this study, you did not use community-level social capital, did you? Please avoid this usage of the term and add more explanations. In contrast, on page 5, line 11 (sentence of “few studies have examined the effects of community social capital on health”), did “community social capital” indicate community-level social capital?

Page 6, lines 23-24: “we sought to investigate the association between bonding and bridging community social capital and self-rated health”…This means that your items of bonding/bridging social capital referred to communities (or your items are based on the activities in the community)? I agree that some groups that you focused on in this study are community-based activities (e.g., elderly club, community association), but some are not (e.g., alumni association). Please clarify this.

2. Page 12, line 10 to page 13, line 3: I could understand you explained that bridging social capital (network with people who have dissimilar background to the individual in relation to gender, age and previous occupation) might increase after retirement among men. However, I could not well-understand why such increased bridging social capital positively affect their self-rated health.

3. Page 14, lines 2-4: “this generation may highly value…the groups they belong to.”…I could not understand the meaning of this sentence.

Minor Essential Revisions

4. Expression of result…for example, page 2, lines 19-20: “bonding and bridging social capital were associated with better self-rated health (OR=0.55 and 0.62).” In this case, it seems to be more accurate to express that “bonding and bridging social capital were inversely (or negatively) associated with poor self-rated health”.

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.