**Reviewer's report**

**Title:** How do couples influence each other's physical activity behaviours in retirement: an exploratory qualitative study

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 30 September 2013

**Reviewer:** Merja Rantakokko

**Reviewer's report:**

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes.
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes.
3. Are the data sound? Yes.
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes.
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes.
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 Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?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.
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes.
9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes.

**General comments**

This paper shows interesting findings of the spousal influences on the physical activity behavior among retired people. This paper is clear and well written. I have few questions and comments, which the authors may wish to do to clarify the text.

** Minor Essential Revisions **

1. In the abstract you mention that the 14 participants…from the existing EPIC-Norfolk study…, but in the methods you write that at least one member of each couple was from this study, not all.
2. Introduction: You start with promotion and health benefits of physical activity, but you do not study this. In addition, referring to different diseases is really far from the design of the present study. This paragraph could be moved to later in the introduction or removed totally; at least I suggest not starting with this.
3. Definition of physical activity is lacking, and should be added.
4. Methods: How much data you finally had? How many transcribed pages? This should be mentioned in the methods.
5. p. 10, “the second author (CG) analysed three transcripts…” Was there any disagreements between these analyses and how these were handled?
6. Results: Did the participants bring out any negative comments? Did the spouse restrict their participation to physical activity? You briefly mention something in the discussion, but I was wondering whether it would be important to bring this up already at the results.

7. Discussion: Couples were interviewed together, and even though researchers feel that the couples were able to share their thoughts freely, they still may not say negative comments of their spouses. I think this is possible limitation of the study, and should be in the discussion.

Discretionary Revisions

8. The results section would benefit from a figure presenting the main and subthemes.

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.