Reviewer’s report

Title: Impact of Social Integration on Metabolic Functions: Evidence from a Nationally Representative Longitudinal Study of US Older Adults

Version: 4 Date: 3 October 2013

Reviewer: Wendy Birmingham

Reviewer’s report:

This study examined the impact of social integration and support on metabolic function including total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein, hemoglobin, waist circumference, and systolic and diastolic blood pressure and overall burden. The authors use data from the Health and Retirement Study across five waves. Study results indicate high social integration lowers risk of both individual and overall metabolic dysregulation.

Major compulsory revisions: none.

Minor compulsory revisions:
1. Abstract, Results section: overuse of the word “And”. I’d change it out with “in addition” or similar.
2. Page 17: “….adults of all ages whereas ours consists only older adults” insert “of” between “consists” and “only”

The study question posed by the authors is well defined and thought out. The methods are appropriate for the study question and are described well. The data appear sound and the manuscript adequately reports the statistical measures used. I felt the discussion and conclusion sections were well balanced and adequately addressed the findings and the limitation of the study. I agree with the authors that while social integration was reported, an understanding of the quality of the relationships would have been a valuable piece of information and warrants further examination. The writing was clear and acceptable, the title and abstract accurately conveyed the purpose and findings of the study. Overall, I could find no major problems with the study or the manuscript and believe that this is an important addition to the current literature on social support, social integration and disease processes.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests