Reviewer's report

Title: Blacks and Whites in the Cuba Have Equal Prevalence of Hypertension: Confirmation from a New Population Survey

Version: 2 Date: 18 November 2012

Reviewer: Luisa Borrell

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

Blacks and Whites in the Cuba Have Equal Prevalence of Hypertension: Confirmation from a New Population Survey

The manuscript (MS) reports findings on the examination of racial difference on hypertension from a survey conducted among adults 15 to 74 years of age in Cienfuegos, Cuba, in 2011. The MS examines an important issue —race in Cuba—an environment where social stratification and the racism associated with it may be different or play a lesser role on the day to day individuals’ lives. Thus, the MS has the potential to contribute to our understanding on how race as a social construct works to affect individual’s health status, and foremost, lead to health disparities. However, the MS has several content and methodological issues.

Specific comments

1) The introduction could make a stronger argument for race and context and perhaps present evidence from Hispanics in the US and other countries such as Venezuela (see Ryder et al Invest Clin. 2007 Mar;48(1):45-55: Black Hispanics have a worse cardiovascular risk profile than mixed Hispanics in Venezuela).

2) The second paragraph needs some work as each sentence seems disconnected.

3) The aim of the paper is ill-defined. The authors should be specific about what exactly the association of interest is and whether sex/gender is examined as an effect measure modifier.

4) The methods section could be organized better to present information on a systematic way. As it is right now, the section seems mushy as the information is being presented in pieces. For example, the description of blood pressure started on the second sentence of the first paragraph on page 6 but the actual definition for analysis was presented at the end of the page. Please present the information following an order: study design and data, sample and inclusion criteria, variables used (outcome, exposures and covariates) and statistical analysis.

5) The issue of an ill-defined aim has a domino effect on the statistical analysis as the description seems generic.

6) Given the high prevalence of hypertension, the prevalence ratio would be more appropriate than the prevalence odds ratios.
7) References are needed in the methods where the authors allude that the population of Cienfuegos is similar to the general population in Cuba (page 5 end of first paragraph of the Methods section).

8) The issue of race in Cuba and the Caribbean deserves more attention as there are some racial lines. An example of this racial line is the racial relationship of Cubans in Miami.

9) The authors should discuss the way race was collected given that race was assigned based on observations by the interviewers in contrast to self-identification as it is in the US. This is important given that recent research suggests that how people identify others may be more detrimental than how they identify themselves when it comes to opportunities (C Jones et al.)

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests