Reviewer’s report

Title: The influence of neighbourhood formality status and socio-economic position on self-rated health among adult men and women: a multilevel, cross sectional, population study from Aleppo, Syria

Version: 2 Date: 26 January 2013

Reviewer: Spencer Moore

Reviewer’s report:

COMMENTS:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. It is a well-written and well-conceived study, and can make a unique contribution to the neighbourhood health literature in developing countries.

I only have a few minor points that I would like to see clarified in the text:

Minor Essential Revisions

1) What are "formal" and "informal" neighbourhoods? For those unfamiliar with the context, could the authors explain what these concepts mean and the potential implications/pathways by which "formality" may impact a man’s or woman’s health. The authors touch on this slightly in the discussion but I think it is important to have these terms defined in the introduction as well as some theoretical/conceptual discussion of why formality might matter.

2) Relatedly, I became a bit confused when the authors discussed “true” neighbourhoods (p. 6). What do the authors mean by this term and on what basis does one evaluate whether a neighbourhood is a true one or not?

Discretionary Revision

3) Minor point (p. 4, line 2) in Background: Instead of "Evidence ...show", I would suggest saying "Evidence....suggest"....

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.