Reviewer's report

Title: Alcohol use and spousal mental distress in a population sample: The Nord-Trondelag Health Study

Version: 1 Date: 2 February 2013

Reviewer: Karl Peltzer

Reviewer's report:

This study aims to assess the association between spousal distress and problem alcohol use in couples in a large population sample from 1995-97 in Norway.

Major

Methods
What is the reference of the first alcohol measure. Not sure on which basis the threshold values were chosen? Would it not make sense to base a threshold on the grammes alcohol consumed defined as cut-offs for harmful drinking? Also for the CAGE, are there no cut offs? Please, explain the reasoning why each CAGE item had to be used individually?

Analysis
It appears unlikely that all measures have normal distributions, provide tests results to support this, if not non-parametric tests should be used, same for the linear regression.

It appears paramount that dyadic analysis should at least also be used for the analysis of the couple data, because of the partner influences stated in the paper.

Minor
Please, explain the context of health examination, which was or was not part of this study.

Discretionary Revisions
Should there not be a descriptive table on the frequencies/values for female and for male partners separately

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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