Reviewer's report

Title: Fear of crime and the environment: Systematic review of UK qualitative evidence

Version: 1 Date: 9 February 2013

Reviewer: Jonathan Jackson

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Fear of crime is an important – albeit complex – issue in public health. While a number of reviews of the literature exist, none have focused on the evidence emanating from qualitative research. This is a significant gap, since qualitative work has proved to be important in expanding the conceptual and theoretical resources in this field of enquiry.

The current manuscript is thus to be welcomed. In my judgement it is a good – if concise – review of the UK qualitative research into fear of crime. The objectives are well defined, the methodological approach is appropriate, and the discussions and conclusions are well balanced.

I have two suggestions -- one minor essential revision, the other a discretionary revision.

The minor essential revision: One thing that I miss from the review is the idea that different people can come to different conclusions about the same environmental cues. This has been explored in UK-based qualitative work by Evi Girling, Stephen Farrall and others. Broader social and economic anxieties have been implicated in differential perception.

The discretionary revision: I would suggest you include, in the first few paragraphs, reference to the work of Mai Stafford and colleagues, who have used Whitehall II Study data to examine the links between worry about crime and physical and psychological health. One study was published in the American Journal of Public Health, the other study was published in the British Journal of Criminology.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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