Reviewer's report

**Title:** Social participation and mental health: Moderating effects of gender, social role and rurality

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 25 June 2013

**Reviewer:** Anu Molarius

**Reviewer's report:**

The manuscript is considerably improved, it is now easier to read and the results and their public health implications are discussed in their context. The authors have sufficiently dealt with most of the points raised in the review. I have a few remaining comments and questions.

#1 The authors answer that age, income and years of education were now treated as categorical variables in the regression analyses (which can be seen in Table 3) but in the methods section (p. 8) it is said for years of education that “We used midpoints of each scale to treat these variables as continuous in the analysis:”. Should this sentence be deleted?

#4 The authors have given the number of persons excluded because of depressive symptoms at baseline in their answer, but this should be given in the methods section of the manuscript.

#5 The fact that persons with depressive symptoms at baseline were excluded (which have not been the case in many previous studies) can be seen as a strength of this study.

Last, I am not fully satisfied with how the authors answer to the question whether it can be a problem, for example for the generalisability of the results, that the study is based on 2,728 subjects of the original sample of 23,152 persons. A large part of this is due to non-response and part is due to depressive symptoms at baseline. But if 7,855 responded to the second wave and 1,650 were omitted due to depressive symptoms, where did the remaining 3,477 persons disappear when 2,728 were included in the study? The authors should be more detailed in explaining this (in the methods) and whether it has any implications for the study results (in the discussion).

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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.