Reviewer's report

**Title:** Intimate partner violence and help-seeking - a cross-sectional study of women in Sweden

**Version:** 5  **Date:** 3 June 2013

**Reviewer:** Mariano Salazar

**Reviewer's report:**

Thank you for inviting me to review this manuscript.

**Major revisions**

**Abstract**

The background is too long. It needs to be more precise and focus on the issue under discussion. The term psychosocial health it’s too abstract. A definition must be added so that the reader can be clear about the study aim. Also, the definition needs to specify what psychological and social aspects were assessed in this study.

The results must provide answers to the study aim. Currently, the results does not clearly answer the study aim (“aims to examine psychosocial health among IPV exposed women who have not sought help from the social services or women shelters due to IPV.”). For example, the study is not about help seeking thus the as it is written, the first line of the results section does not have to do with the aim of the study.

**Conclusion**

The last sentence presented on this section advocating for IPV screening at health services it is not clearly supported from the data presented in this manuscript.

**Background**

IPV and domestic violence are different concepts. It is necessary to make this distinction when using them thought all the text.

On page five a lot of space is dedicated to the concept of health seeking. It makes me wonder that if the focus of the study is psychosocial health, why the authors should need to be go in-depth about the help seeking concept?

**Study aim**

The study aim presented on page 7 is different from the study aim presented on the abstract. As it is now it confuses the reader.

**Methods**

The first paragraph describing he participants should be locate under in a
different section, might be under the description the instrument used.

Page 7 and 8. I suggest to add a more clear subtitle such as “sample size and sampling strategy”. The way that the non help seeking group of women were selected it is not clear. A flow chart describing the process can be a good way to make it easier for the reader to understand it.

Page 10. First sentence under “measures” not needed.

Page 11. It is not clear how to interpret the cut off score of 44 (for the psychosocial functioning variable). Reduced psychosocial functioning means a score of 44 or higher or is it the opposite?

Missing values
How were the missing values handled? What happened to those variables or questionnaires?

Statistical analysis

It is said that Spearman’s rank order correlation was used to assess relationships between binary variables. This statistic it’s usually used to measure correlation between continuous variables with a distribution different than normal. Why was it used here? Why not used chi2 statistic?

In logistic regression, variable inflation factor and tolerance statistics are used to assess collinearity between the variables included in the model. Why were not evaluated here? It seems that other methods were used to assess collinearity. Please provide a reference to it.

Page 15. A number of cases were excluded from the analysis. Was there any significant difference between the cases included and those excluded from the analysis? Were other statistical procedures to deal with missing data considered before deciding to eliminate some cases?

Tables.

Tables 1-2. Report only two decimals. The sample size is not big enough to provide that level of precision. No sample size is described in the table for each group included. Specify what unit of measurements were used; i.e. age (years) and so on.

Table 3. Delete constant. Report only two decimals. The sample size is not big enough to provide that level of precision.

Results

Page 17. Experiences of violence. It’s mentioned that no difference in violence exposures was found. However, from table 2, it is possible to identify that exposure to any form of violence was higher among women looking for help than among those not looking for health.
Page 18. Second paragraph. It is important to show the table depicting the differences between women born or not in Sweden if the so much text is used to describe it any way.

Discussion

Subtitles are needed in order to make it easier for the reader to follow the discussion structure.

The discussion on alcohol consumption and the citizenship of the women is difficult to follow because this is not clearly shown on the result section of the manuscript.

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

**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' below.