Reviewer’s report

Title: The Burden of Chronic Diseases in a Rural North Florida Sample

Version: 2 Date: 17 May 2013

Reviewer: Marianne M Hillemeier

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have made a thorough and conscientious effort to address all reviewer comments, and the manuscript is considerably strengthened.

My remaining concern is that while the paper is about health in a rural population, the background section does not mention rural health issues at all until the fourth paragraph. This journal is read by a public health-savvy audience that can be assumed to be quite familiar with the Healthy People initiative. I suggest that the first paragraph of the background section begin with what is currently the third sentence of the first paragraph. It should then continue with a modified version of the first sentence of paragraph 4, and move on from there. This would result in the following introductory sentences:

At the national level, there is extensive documentation of past, current, and persistent health inequalities [1] associated with most major chronic diseases among populations differing in socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, and age [2-5]. National input for Healthy People 2020 recommended expanded health goals and objectives designed to achieve health equity, eliminate disparities, and improve health [13]. Unfortunately, inequalities in health based on geographic region (urban vs. rural) were not reflected in these goals [14, 15]. The degree of health disparity present in rural communities and the lack of a rural voice at the policy table has been a growing concern [14, 16]. This concern.....

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

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

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