This interesting study aimed at investigating the relationship between adolescents' health status at the start of secondary education and their subsequent school career and the effect of parental socio-economic status on this relationship. Through the analysis of secondary school career data of 2455 adolescents, the researchers concluded that more frequent contact with their GP for acute psychosocial problems were less likely to complete their secondary education, also after adjustment for parental socio-economic position. They were also less likely to complete their secondary education at the level of entry.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The thesis of “social selection” or “social drift” argues that mental disorders hinder social attainment (e.g. by interfering with school performance) and lead to a downward shift in SES. In support of this thesis, a recent report from the 1958 British birth cohort highlights the large effects that poor mental health in childhood had on intergenerational and within-generation social mobility at age 50 (Goodman, Joyce, Smith, 2011). Likewise, previous analyses of the same cohort reported that childhood internalizing and externalizing disorders were associated with reduced upward social mobility and manual adult social-economic position at age 45 (Stansfeld, Clark, Rodgers, Caldwell, Power, 2011). Previous research has suggested that social causation and social selection processes vary in importance between categories of mental disorders (Miech, Caspi, Moffitt, Wright, Silva, 1999; Johnson, Cohen, Dohrenwend, Link, Brook, 1999; Dohrenwend, Levav, Shrout, Schwartz, Naveh, Link, Skodol, Stueve, 1992). Externalizing disorders in particular (Miech, Caspi, Moffitt, Wright, Silva, 1999; Johnson, Cohen, Dohrenwend, Link, Brook, 1999) seem to be associated with low SES during childhood and adolescence while the relationship between low SES and internalizing disorders partly seems to be explained by comorbidity with externalizing problems (Amon-P’Olak, Burger, Ormel, Huisman, Verhulst, Oldehinkel, 2009). Although both externalizing and internalizing disorders are likely to be detrimental to school results, externalizing disorders in particular could be key determinants of educational problems (Miech et al, 1999; Johnson et al., 1999). A large body of research on children, adolescents, and young adults indicates that externalizing disorders are closely related to significant academic
underachievement and also to impaired school functioning (including absenteeism, grade retention and dropout) (McLeod & Kaiser, 2004; Barbaresi, Katusic, Colligan, Weaver, Jacobsen, 2007; Breslau, Lane, Sampson, Kessler, 2008; Miech et al, 1999).

It would be very meaningful if the authors address all this previous knowledge in the background section of the paper and in the discussion of their findings.

Also, it would be very helpful for the reader if the authors gave more information defining the term "acute psychosocial health problems" in the abstract and the methods section and possible explain more the term "level of entry".

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests