Reviewer's report

Title: Socioeconomic inequalities in chronic conditions among older people in Australia: cross-sectional findings from the 45 and Up Study

Version: 1
Date: 27 March 2014
Reviewer: Nathalie Huguet

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Why only compare lowest and highest income groups? It seems that using <$10K may be limiting. According to a 2012 poverty in Australia report, the poverty level was (for a single individual) at 18K. I suggest the authors use <$20K versus #70K. One other option would be to look at all categories (income as a continuous) and explore whether the trends in the figures are significant.

2. Limitation: "most population-based cohort studies" should be deleted. Not all national studies have such a low response rate. This may be the case in Australia, but should not be generalized to all surveys. 18% however is very low. It would be useful to provide the distribution of income for these age and gender groups using Australian national estimates as a reference.

3. Clarify the following "internal comparisons of the relative inequality are valid"

4. The discussion could benefit from additional statements. A paragraph discussing the results and implications of higher income-related inequalities among those diagnosed with diabetes, those with severe physical functioning impairment and psychological distress is needed.

5. The "novelty" of this study, according to the background, is the ability to detect inequalities in oldest old (>=80), yet very little is discussed regarding the results in older age.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. On page 8, next to the "57646" excluded due to missing income, add the percent of missing income.

2. On page 8, last paragraph, there are too many numbers making it hard to follow. Delete "where the overall prevalence was ...", this information is in the table.

3. The paragraph starting with "the 45 and up study .... in population health" belongs in the method.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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