Reviewer’s report

Title: Increase of mild disability in Japanese elders: A seven year follow-up cohort study

Version: 3 Date: 30 March 2005

Reviewer: Howard Bergman

Reviewer’s report:

General

Review of a paper: The Increase of mild disability in Japanese elders: a 7 year follow up cohort study

The question posed by the author, although not entirely new, is extremely pertinent and important.

This unique representative sample looking at the progression of disability in an independent 65 + population is extremely interesting: essentially all the community dwelling 65+ in the town were included and were followed annually from 1996-2002.

The methods proposed are appropriate and well described, sufficient details are provided.

The data is sound and well analyzed and the manuscript adheres to the relevant standards for reporting.

The discussion and conclusion are well balanced and provide both the strengths and the weaknesses.

The title and abstract accurately describe the paper.

I propose minor essential revisions which must be made to the paper.

1. The author uses an instrument called TAI. There are several allusions to work on the validity of the TAI for the longitudinal study. This is neither well developed nor appropriate for this paper and should be deleted.

On Page 6 delete the last line of the paragraph longitudinal cohort study: in other words delete: “which is used to evaluate the predictive validity of the measure used in this study”.

On Page 7, the sentence begins with the “the cost of longitudinal studies collecting multiple data …” should be deleted. The following sentence beginning with “Therefore simplicity of the TAI is cost advantage”. Should be deleted as well. This has not been demonstrated or appropriate for this paper.

On Page 18, delete the entire paragraph beginning with the sub title “validity of the TAI”: for longitudinal study.

2. Other minor or changes:

2.1 On Page 6, under the sub-title: Measurement of disability, the first sentence should begin with the word the.
2.2 In the next sentence which reads “Its reproducibility, construct validity and concurrent validity have been established in the previous study”: Replace “the previous study” by a previous study

2.3 In the first line of the next paragraph replace “without” by not having any

2.4 On Page 8, the long paragraph beginning with “Each item in the TAI has six hierarchical states…” this entire paragraph should be moved to page 7 after the first sentenced.

2.5 On Page 8, the 3rd line under the sub title “Retrospective questionnaire on chronic conditions”, the word “Remained” should be replaced by remaining

2.6 On Page 9, the last line should read “describe the correlation of initial disability and future severity”

2.7 On Page 14, under the sub-title “Prevalence and incidence of disability”, 4th line, the sentence beginning “Older age” should read “Older age had an effect on the rate of the disability development”.

2.8 On Page 15, 3rd line, after the mention “Insert Fig. 7 about here”, the words “peculiar in” she be replace be particular to.

2.9 On Page 16, 2nd line, after the mention “insert table 3 about here”, the word “Chronic” should be deleted.

2.10 On Page 21, 2nd paragraph, 1st line, delete “such as cerebrovascular infarction”

I recommend that this paper be accepted after minor essential revisions, which the author must be committed to make.

Although the quality of the written English is deficient in some places, it is certainly more than acceptable.

I don’t believe statistical review is necessary.

I declare no competing interest.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)