Reviewer’s report

Title: Continuous admission to primary school and mental health problems

Version: 1 Date: 21 February 2006

Reviewer: Matti Sillanpää

Reviewer’s report:

General
In general view, a low calendar (and subsequent developmental) age at school entrance may expose children to learning, behavioral and psychosocial problems. So far, few data exist on the effect of a low age on peer relations, bullying, ability to learn etc. This paper makes an attempt to find an answer to the question.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached):
1. The study populations are of utmost importance to the results. Therefore, they should be described in more detail and the figures checked/corrected. The authors give refs #6 and #7 about “a cross-sectional national study on children aged 5-15” but, according to the original ref #6, the age range was 4-16, and ref. #7 (“Identification by child health...”) cannot be found. The body text of ref. #8 does not give the number of subjects, but in the abstract, it reads that they were 6375. This is not equal to 7737 given in the manuscript.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. The total score of the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) was applied. It was translated into Dutch, but was the Dutch translation back-translated into English?
2. It would be interesting to know about the subscales, such as internal and external behavioral and social competence. Were they analyzed?

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
1. Ref. Goodman et al. should be moved to the discussion section.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.