Reviewer’s report

Title: Influence of parental employment status on Dutch and Slovak adolescents health

Version: 1 Date: 28 June 2006

Reviewer: Ossi Rahkonen

Reviewer’s report:

General
The study aims to investigate the effect of parental employment status on adolescents’ health in two different cultural settings, in the Netherlands and Slovakia, in addition, the change over time of this association is examined in Slovakia. The paper is interesting and important, but needs some revisions.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. Prevalence figures for health indicators are needed, just to know what proportion of ill-health etc exists in each cohort. When comparing cultures it is also important to know what we are comparing, 2% vs 4% or 30% vs 40%.
2. Methods; I wouldn’t call retired people as unemployed but non-employed, and I’m not sure that all retired think they don’t have meaningful activity or time structure. Could this be expressed more politically correct way? I may have omitted disable/retired people from the analyses.
3. Discussion; I did see some changes in Slovakia from 1998 to 2002 among girls; ORs for both health measure were significant, among boys the ORs were high but did not reach the statistically significance.
4. As above, some ORs were pretty high (OR=1.61 etc) but were not statistically significant perhaps these should also be looked at more carefully some significances appear randomly, some disappear randomly.
5. The discussion needs some comments on the different age of the cohorts, the mean from 14.9. to 16.3 is large among young people, can this affect the results?
6. The data obviously have information on parental SES, is it possible that it is not the employment status but SES that is important? As the impact of SES on adolescents health varied between countries, can this have an effect on results? I would adjust for parental SES. At least the potential importance of parental socioeconomic status needs to be discussed.

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. Page 3; found no SES differences S was missing
2. Slightly wonder that SRH was dichotomised so that ‘good’ health included with ‘poor’ health in the same category perhaps this was done due to few number of cases might need an explanation.
3. Terminology (page 7), father’s positive employment status, this probably means being employed, someone might think that also such status as parental leave or paternal leave were positive; I would called the leave paternal leave among men, not maternity leave.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory 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'