Reviewer's report

Title: Socioeconomic differentials in premature mortality in Rome: changes from 1990 to 2001

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Reviewer: S V Subramanian

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General
Socioeconomic differentials in premature mortality in Rome: changes from 1990 to 2001

This is a straightforward short paper documenting the changes in the social inequalities in mortality in Rome. I have few minor concerns.

1. The paper needs to be explicit that socioeconomic inequalities are being documented by utilizing socioeconomic information obtained at the aggregate level NOT at the individual level. While this is not problematic in an intrinsic manner, one needs to be cautious about the inferences we draw. The inference is that area-level socioeconomic inequalities in mortality widened over time not individual level. It may or may not have.

2. The paper needs to reference the studies of this genre that has been conducted more recently. See http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/thegeocodingproject/webpage/monograph/publications.htm

3. The discussion is too thin; more elaboration of this within a historical context or a cross-cultural European context would be helpful.

4. Finally, there will always be socioeconomic inequalities and by implication some of this is going to be reflected in the inequalities in health domains as well. The authors need to situate their finding in a more policy relevant context. How much needs to be reduced? Is there a benchmark?

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

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)