Reviewer's report

Title: Ten years of lesbian health survey research in the UK West Midlands

Version: 4 Date: 16 June 2007

Reviewer: Theo G. M. Sandfort

Reviewer's report:

General

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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)

The authors adequately addressed my comments in this new version of the manuscript. Rereading the manuscript, I feel that it has been substantially improved. Unfortunately, it also becomes clear now how “thin” the data is (isn’t there really more information to share?). In this respect, the length of the discussion is somewhat out of balance.

The paper would still profit from some editorial work. The discussion, for instance, could be structured in a more classical way with first a summary of the findings, than a discussion of the findings (what do they mean), than an overview of the limitations of the study and then the scientific and practical meaning of the findings. Each paragraph could start with a general opening sentence that gets elaborated upon in the rest of the paragraph.

Editorial work could also smoothen the transition between paragraphs; for instance, the 4th paragraph of the discussion seems to come out of the blue: what is its relevance, why is this mentioned?

Inclusion of table 5 is helpful; the table needs a better heading, though, and a note indicating that data were not collected with identical assessment procedures (no room should be left for potential misunderstandings). In the opening lines of the discussion the authors acknowledge that the reference data are collected with different methods, but that is not the only difference of course. I assume that the national mental health data were collected in a somewhat more sophisticated way (not only different methods, but also different questions).

Discussion, paragraph 4, line 5: I am not sure what the authors mean with “confounding factors such as social environment.” What I think they mean definitively is not a confounding factor.

Third page of the discussion section, first paragraph: I am not sure what the authors mean when they talk about “insufficient power to detect relatively low incidence rates with statistically significance.”

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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'