Reviewer's report

Title: Consistency Between Education Reported in Health Survey and Recorded in Death Certificate

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Reviewer: Tsung-Hsueh Lu

Reviewer's report:

This study compared education level reported on the death certificate with those reported in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (as gold standard) in Korea. As education level is the most commonly used proxy for socioeconomic position, this kind of study has important implications in explaining social inequalities in Korea.

Most international readers, especially the social epidemiologists, would expect to see whether the biases in reporting education level on the death certificates might affect the conclusions of previous published studies on the socioeconomic inequalities in mortality in Korea. According the figures in Table 1, 20% of no education (NHANES) were over-reported as elementary school and no college or higher cases been under-reported as no education. The mortality rate ratio or rate difference between college or higher and no education (most commonly analysis) would be underestimated.

The authors did too many trivial analyses and most of them could not have decisive impacts of the social inequality study. The over- and under-statement rates would be most relevant. Since the author used the education level reported in NHANES as gold standard, it’s not necessary to calculate Kappa coefficient, which express only the agreement level.

The first paragraph (page 4 and 5) is too long which could be separated into three paragraphs. Line 11 “In addition, …” could be a new paragraph. The third lines from the bottom :Education is ..” could be another new paragraph.

95% confidence intervals could be given for all agreement measures such as sensitivity, specificity, over- and under-statement rates.

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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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