Reviewer's report

Title: Leisure and religious activity participation and mental health: gender analysis of older adults in a developing country.

Version: 1 Date: 26 June 2007

Reviewer: Annie Rochette

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an interesting study looking at relationships between specific activity frequency and two outcomes (depression and satisfaction with life) in a population from a developing country. However, there are major issues with the methods and mistakes found in the data which makes me uncomfortable in approving this manuscript for a publication.

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

Abstract: include a sentence to describe the sample and add raw data to support findings.

Across the manuscript, change the word 'predict' for 'related' as this study was cross-sectional.

Page 9. Justify why the SWL original 7-point scale was reduce to a 5-points scale. Also reference [73] used to support psychometric properties of the SWL refers to another tool: 'General Health Questionnaire'.

p. 9-10. Measure for leisure and religious activity: justify why not using a participation tool and specify the time frame i.e. how often they were engaged in these activities “in the past year”??!

Page 10.: statistical analysis: describe what strategy was used for the regression analysis, how independent variables were chosen, etc.

Page.14. Discussion authors state ‘A higher number of women (20.2%) expressed their health as bad compared to males (14.2%)…’. However, according to data in table 1, this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 1: age in years: results by category are not necessary. Perceived health: numbers do not balance (35+49=248!?). For the GDS and SWLS: indicate the maximum possible score. Also add raw data, results about social support to son and from son as this independent variable is included in further analysis. Finally, t-test for categorical variables such as financial satisfaction, education and perceived health makes no sense.

Table 2 and 3. Some cells have so small numbers (<10), must have had trouble to do the stats. This needs to be discussed.
Table 4 and 5: Top legend is not clear to the reader: what is B p B p?

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

Overall, literature review is much too long and exhaustive and not focused enough on the topic: leisure and religious activities and relationships to depression and satisfaction with life plus the role of gender.

Page 5. Why including studies on cognitive performance? What is the association with the variables under study?

Page 7. Methods: for the reader, the inclusion criteria ‘living with at least one married son’ is difficult to understand and requires explanation and justification (put it in context).

Page 8. Ethical considerations: I don’t understand the sentence about fingerprint documentation...

Page 8. GDS: is the Hindi version a Nepali version? Use consistent terms across the manuscript.

Page 16. Authors state: ‘this may have affected the reporting of the activities and result in under-reporting.’ From what we read in the manuscript, it could also have resulted in ‘over-reporting’ for religious activities for males as they state that males are expected to be priest...

Page 10. Statistical analysis, specify which test were used for what analysis, for which objectives.

Page 11-13. Results: there are mistakes in which tables the reader is referred to. For example, p. 11 reader should read ‘see table 2 AND 3’

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Page 11. Results, description of the sample: could be shorter. Ideally, it is not a repetition of the table only a highlight of important data. If chooses to present mean, always accompany by a standard deviation.

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: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'