Reviewer's report

Title: Contextual socioeconomic determinants of cardiovascular risk factors in rural south-west China: A multilevel analysis

Version: 1 Date: 23 November 2006

Reviewer: Georgios Lyratzopoulos

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an interesting study, providing empirical evidence about distribution of important CVD risk factors in part of China. I have little reservation about neither the overall methodological validity of the research, nor about its relevance - given the degree of underrepresentation in the global literature in English language of studies relating to Chinese populations. I would therefore have a very low threshold for recommending publication asap, once points below are addressed.

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

Title and overall use in the text of term "contextual". Why not "environmental" or "community", instead of contextual. Epidemiological terminology is inconsistent and changing, and although use of "contextual" may be acceptable, I would wish that the authors somewhere in discussion entertain its relative merits and dismerits and reflect on the preference for this term.

Abstract, conclusion. Very brief, and "out of the blue". As presented, it is too strong a statement, and not justified by the evidence presented -which is a survey, and not a community intervention study itself. I would recommend that some more sentences / wors are expended in this section, and it is a) first acknowledged that contextual factors may be important b), given "a", that interventions at community level may therefore be important.

Page 6, Methods. Three BP measurements - BP measures were based on the average of three BP readings. This is a bit unusual, I believe, certainly going by Healht Survey for England / Scotland standard (reject 1st, and keep average of 2nd-3rd measurement), and also by MONICA standards. Somewhere in methods discuss issue - comparability.

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

Results are very wordy, a lot of findings, serially exposed. Try editing?

Idem, Tables could do with some more explanation in legends and or footnotes.

What b value means (in Table 5) should be explained a bit in Statistical analysis section of Methods, and in Table (e.g. footnote).

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

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