Reviewer’s report

Title: Impact of social ties on self reported health in France: Is everyone affected equally?

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Reviewer: Luisa N Borrell

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Impact of social ties on self reported health in France: Is everyone affected equally?

This manuscript proposes to examine whether social ties have a different impact on health according to social economics status in France. Although the manuscript addresses an important and timely issue, the manuscript has several content, organizational and methodological issues that need to be addressed before any further consideration of the manuscript. The manuscript also needs some serious editing throughout.

Introduction

The introduction is too long. It could benefit from a more concise presentation of the existing evidence to make a stronger argument for the rationale of the study. The aims of the study are poorly stated and the authors should consider a better choice of words for the aims. For instance, examine and/or investigate are better choice than see and look (page 5, 3rd paragraph). Finally, the authors stated that they “want to look at the effect of social ties within 4 levels of income.” The latter statement suggests that social ties will be assessed in each level of income. Perhaps the authors should re-phrase the sentence as follows: We want to examine the association of social ties and self-reported health across levels of income.

Methods

The reviewer is wondering out of how many households were the 8,000 households were included in the sampling frame selected from? Also, was there any difference in socio-demographic characteristics of the geographic areas between the households included and excluded? It will be helpful to provide some information regarding the individuals included and those excluded from the study. In addition, the reviewer is concerned with the low cut point to define adults, 15 years and older. Perhaps a reference or explanation should be added. How does the sample selected in 1997 compared to the closest Census population?

The authors need to provide more details regarding the covariates included in the analyses. In addition, the reviewer is concerned why education was not included in the analyses. It will be helpful if more details are provided for the outcome and
the main predictor. It would be helpful to provide details on how income was collected and the rationale for the 4 categories. Finally, there is a need for details on social ties, how the variable was collected and how it was included in the analyses.

The statistical analyses part of the Methods session provided very little information on what was done. It is not clear why ordinal logistic regression was used when there is not a true order or rank in the outcome (average to very poor health versus very good to excellent health). The interactions part is very confusing. It needs to be clearly stated whether each component of the social ties variable was fitted separately in the analysis.

Given the sampling design, the reviewer is wondering whether any weights were developed to represent the French population.

Table 1 should include information on social ties. A footnote needs to be added regarding the p-values presented.

Table 2 should include 95% Confidence Intervals (CI) with the prevalence ratios (PR).

Table 3: 95% CI should be included instead of SE with the prevalence ratios. It is not clear whether the PR in the main effects with interaction models for the interaction part represents the actual PRs for each category. Ideally and for easy interpretation, the analyses are presented stratified by the 3rd variable, income in this case. Right now, it is not clear how those ORs were calculated or obtained.

Results, Discussion and Abstract
These sessions need to be revised to reflect changes made in the analyses.

As with the introduction, the Discussion could be kept short.

**What next?:** Reject because scientifically unsound

**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:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests.