Reviewer's report

Title: Male and Female Adult Population Health Status in China: A Cross-Sectional National Survey

Version: 1 Date: 7 March 2008

Reviewer: Henrik Brønnum-Hansen

Reviewer's report:

The paper presents health status by various measures and the prevalence of exposure to selected risk factors among the adult Chinese population in 2003. The results of the study are important because it is based on a large survey in the most populous country in the world. Although it appears to be the intention of the authors to follow up the article by result-oriented papers, it is not really a design article giving details of the Third National Health Services Survey.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The content of the paper is descriptive and provides important information for generating research questions for future studies. However, the survey data make it possible to answer a lot of questions. For instance, the paper would benefit from the inclusion of an analysis of the clustering of risk factors and health problems by educational level, by rural/urban residency or the east-west gradient. Because this is the third national health survey another interesting possibility would be to study trends. I recommend that the authors expand the article by presenting results from analyses of some of these topics.

Minor Revisions, questions and suggestions

1. The conclusions of the abstract exceed the topics of and the results from the study.
2. In the third section of the Introduction I suggest: "Life expectancy is... calculate it as vital data" (not "collected").
3. How is physical inactivity defined? What is meant by "regular exercise in the last 6 months"?
4. In "Health Status and Determinants" in the Result section I suggest the change: "Men had lower prevalence of heart disease (1.4% versus 2.4%), hypertension (3.2% versus 4.0%) and rheumatologic arthritis (0.8% versus 1.5%) than women." This would be clearer, because the figures in brackets are men versus women.
5. Quality of life and Table 3 might be presented for people older than say 65 years, because I imagine that the problems are mainly related to older people.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions.
Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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