Reviewer's report

Title: The Influence of Active Coping and Perceived Stress on Health Disparities in a Multi-Ethnic Low Income Sample

Version: 1 Date: 18 September 2007

Reviewer: Ari Haukkala

Reviewer's report:

This paper addresses an important topic on health disparities and aims to explore what kind of factors could explain possible disparities between SES groups in a multi-ethnic sample.

The main problem in this paper is that all information is self-reported and the information is cross-sectional.

The topics and variables of this paper (SES disparities, ethnic comparisons, John Heynerism, health effects of stress and coping) could have created an opportunity for more focused hypothesis.

Minor points in manuscript that could improve MS.

Some of the citations should have been updated more especially stress and health citations (7 to 10).

There should be some indication of response rate. Although I am not expert in US telephone based sampling methods I believe there are some standards to report how many respondents finally participated to study from certain selected sample.

I did not find information about age range or mean age of the sample. Age should have been used as a covariate in the analyses.

Possible problems with statistical power in interaction testing should have been addressed in the limitations of the study or methods section.

It is not clear if the subjective SES scale is continuous or dichotomous in tables 2, 3 and 4.

Number of items in discrimination scale is missing. Cronbach alphas with this sample should have been reported in methods section for continuous scales.

In table 1 it would have been easy to add p-values for differences between ethnic groups. Number of subjects in the analyses should have shown somewhere in other tables as well.

Relating to subjective information and cross-sectional design there should be some discussion how much psychological factors like neuroticism or depressive...
symptoms could cause the association between self rated health indicators and perceived stress.

**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:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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