Reviewer’s report

Title: Effects of phone versus mail survey methods on the measurement of psychosocial constructs in adolescents

Version: 1 Date: 14 May 2009

Reviewer: jennifer powers

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions

1. This study attempts to investigate differences in responses to KINDL-R, a health related quality of life questionnaire and SDQ, a strengths and difficulties questionnaire due to administration by telephone or postal survey. As neither of these questionnaires is particularly well-known, it would be good to have more detail as to what they are measuring.

2. The aims of the study need to be defined more clearly and there is apparently an investigation of floor and ceiling effects for one or both instruments but these are not mentioned again in the paper.

3. It is unclear to me how the data for Table 6 were analysed. Were there multiple multinomial logistic regressions? What was included in each regression model?

4. The number and percentage of respondents presented in the methods for telephone surveys are different to those presented in the results. Further the figures in the text and tables are not the same. Why are the N's presented as ranges? How many children and parents actually responded? Similarly the text is not consistent with the figures in Table 4. Standardised mean differences are presented in the abstract but are not in the results section of the paper.

5. It is hard to evaluate the discussion without further information about what the two instruments are measuring. However it does appear that mental health related domains such as the psychological domain of the KINDL-R are affected more strongly than the physical domain.

6. As the authors stated the effects were relatively small. However these effects appear to be different among children and their parents for some of the domains. Despite being relatively small, the effects could bias the results when comparing children and parents and they would be also important if looking at changes over time.

7. Categories should be collapsed for parental status in Table 1.

8. Is the SDQ not applicable for 8-12 year olds? The authors should explain why results are not presented for 8-12 and 13-18 year olds in Table 4.

9. References 20 and 21 are in twice for different papers.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests