Reviewer's report

Title: Assessment of the general public knowledge about rheumatic diseases: evidence from a Portuguese population-based survey

Version: 1 Date: 21 March 2010

Reviewer: Ivanio Pereira

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions:
1-I suggest that abbreviations written in the abstract should be previously defined, such as resp.
2-The results reported in abstract are difficult to understand. I think that authors could write the percentage of some important responses found in the questionnaire applied to this population.
3-The methodology described in this paper is complex and need to be written with the idea that the majority of rheumatologists that will read this paper in this journal are not familiar with latent models.
4-Considering that as a rheumatologist, I do not know the correct answer of the question about glandular fever, I suggest that this question could be excluded.
5-The authors should define in the paper what were considered correct answers for the questions.
6-The conclusions in abstract should not discuss the advantages of one statistical model, but the real conclusions based in the results found. Maybe could be:
There are several gaps in the overall knowledge about rheumatic diseases in the general population. One out of four considered the false general beliefs as true and approximately 30% did not have detailed knowledge on rheumatic disease. Higher education and the presence of disease contributed positively to the overall knowledge. These results suggest some degree of effectiveness of patient education, either conducted by health professionals or self-driven.
7-There are some paragraphs in discussion that discuss methodology with much statistical details, and I think that in this part of the paper this could be summarized and easier to be understood. One of the examples is that:
The poor fit and the poor internal consistency (alpha=0.628) of the 1-factor LTM was not unexpected. Even the 2-factor LTM (17 items) was not itself completely satisfactory: a careful inspection of the pairwise marginal residuals showed large discrepancies between the observed and expected frequencies for some pairs of items, namely for those whose statement followed the structure “… is a kind of rheumatic disease.” Only after the elimination of these four items the internal consistency improved (0.700 and 0.630 for LT1 and LT2, respectively).
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.