Reviewer’s report

Title: The validity of aggregate income and education measures to proxy self-report: Does it depend on the patient group?

Version: 1 Date: 17 August 2010

Reviewer: Birgit Marie Nielsen

Reviewer’s report:

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1) Front-page: Superscript numbers before names of the institutions

2) Abstract: Introduce abbreviations the first time of appearance (line 1, socioeconomic status (SES))

3) Table 1, 3,4,5,6: State the statistical test used to derive the p-value.

4) Table 1, 3,4,5,6: write the abbreviations used below the table.

5) Table 1,6: for the CT and DA neighbourhood level university degree you include a high number of persons – isn’t that wrong?

6) Table 4,5: Introduce table 4 and table 5 in the text.

7) Throughout: Number of subjects should be abbreviated with “n” and not “N”.

8) References: Reference to an internet address should be followed by the day of access or the date of the version cited. Also include publisher and title of the page/document.

9) If the possibility of objective information existed then your study would have a diminished value unless the self reported measures were compared with the objective measures. Therefore you should emphasize why you can not obtain an objective measure of income and education. Either in the background or discussion section.

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

10) In the Method section, you state that the aggregate-level data was obtained for 2001, while self-report of data was in 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008. Although you correct the income for inflation, I suggest that the potential bias arising from the timeframe between measures is addressed in the discussion.

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