Reviewer's report

Title: Lack of Access to Chemotherapy for Colon Cancer: Multiplicative Disadvantage of Being Extremely Poor, Inadequately Insured and African America

Version: 1 Date: 17 February 2014

Reviewer: Angeline Ferdinand

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this timely and interesting manuscript regarding ethnic and sociodemographic inequities in accessing chemotherapy for colon cancer. The authors have provided a clear explanation of the research question and rationale and the methods seem appropriate to address the question. The finding that the cumulative effects of poverty, ethnicity and inadequate health insurance coverage accounted for disparities in survival rates between African-Americans and non-Hispanic white Americans is important and has significant implications for health care policy and reform. My only comments are minor.

Minor essential revisions

1. Overall, the paper is well structured and easy to follow; however, writing errors and awkward phrasing are distracting throughout the manuscript. While I have outlined a number of instances below, these are not exhaustive and the entire paper should be edited to improve the clarity and quality of the writing.

Discretionary revisions

1. I would question the use of 'Obamacare' in the abstract and encourage the authors to use either the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act or the Affordable Care Act.

2. In the Background section, the authors state, “That is, their AA participants probably had substantially lower incomes than their NHWA counterparts, even in the lowest income neighborhoods studied.” While this may be the case, it doesn’t seem to necessarily follow from the statements immediately prior, as the wording suggests.

3. In the Methods section, the authors state that people of other racial or ethnic backgrounds were excluded. It would be useful to explain why the decision was made to study only AAs and NHWAs.

Minor issues not for publication

2. Abstract; Results section, last sentence: “While among…” should simply be “Among…”
3. Abstract, Conclusions section, second sentence: “…indirect and direct, but uncovered costs…” should have another comma after “uncovered.”

4. Background, second paragraph: insert “to be” after “consistently found”

5. Background, third paragraph, third sentence: “They therefore had limited power…” rather than “So they had limited power…”

6. Results, first paragraph, last sentence and Results, second paragraph, third sentence: Please don’t begin sentences with “and.”

7. Discussion section, first paragraph: insert commas after “First” and “Next.”

8. Discussion section, first paragraph, fourth sentence: NHWAs rather than NHWs


10. Conclusion, fourth sentence: “AAs” rather than “AA’s”

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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.