Reviewer's report

Title: Gender differences in health care use among the elderly population in Norway and Finland. A cross-sectional analysis based on the HUNT Study and the FINRISK Senior Survey.

Version: 1 Date: 30 May 2006

Reviewer: Anu Kasmel

Reviewer's report:

General

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

- The research question posed by the author is not what we call new, however, it is in concert with current gender equity policies.
- Although the aim of the study is clearly defined I would suggest to demonstrate that study focusses to certain relatively different regions (rural versus metropolitan area) in Norway and Finland, not to whole countries.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

The methods are described sufficiently detailed way.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?

The data collection methods differ â€“ interviews in Nord-trondelag, Norway and and self-administered questionnaires in Finland â€“ this may have impact to responses. The different approaches in data collection should be discussed in article.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

The manuscript is prepared adhering relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

The discussion is adequately supported by data and author have created several hypothesis to explane findings, which are also discussed. Although current study does not allow to confirm these hypothesis author tends to make conclusions which are not supported by the data. I would suggest not to conclude that patients gender seemed to play role in access to secondary care in Norway, rather to conclude that there are differences in self-reported use of secondary care among different genders in Nord trondelag, Norway and Helsinki metropolitan are and north kareli, Finland.

As regions seleced for study are relatively specific (rural county in Norway and metropolitan area in Finland) I would suggest to refer these areaa, not to generalize conclusions for whole countries.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

The title confuse reader in terms of study region (see comment 5). Concerning conclusion â€“ current study demonstrates differences, so I would suggest in conclusion to argue that.

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

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests