Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 26 June 2006

Reviewer: Hynek Pikhart

Reviewer's report:

General

The authors tried to answer all the points raised in previous review.
The authors explained the methodology in more details and added several paragraphs to their discussion.
I think whole manuscript is much clearer in current version.
I only have couple of minor comments related to table 1 and another comment related to samples comparability that the authors may choose to ignore.

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

Table 1 - Region - I think the authors entered incorrect numbers in the cells related to North Karelia and Helsinki regions - there is 3x number "396" and sums are very different from gender totals at the top.

Could the authors explain why there are so many missing values even for age (18 men and 22 women) in Finland while Norwegian data are almost complete?

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

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

The additional sample description of the FINRISK study brings more questions about direct comparability and representativeness of the Finnish sample. Combining the capital and rural area of North Karelia cannot easily be described as representative population of the whole Finland. The authors extensively discuss possible reasons for country differences in the findings but they do not consider the difference in the sample selection as one of the possible reasons for the difference in results. Did the authors try to compare results of Helsinki area and North Karelia area?

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.