Reviewer's report

Title: Association of Socio-Economic Status with Diabetes Prevalence and Utilization of Diabetes Care

Version: 1 Date: 15 June 2006

Reviewer: Jessica Robbins

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an interesting and well-written study addressing the important issue of assessing possible socioeconomic disparities in access to diabetes care. The question is well-defined, and the methods are described clearly and in adequate detail. The data appear sound and the analytic methods appropriate. The results are reported clearly.

The discussion is generally good, but downplays the limitations associated with the study’s ecologic design. The possibility of ecologic fallacy playing a role here is quite significant. The authors should note in this context the significant association of referral proportion with higher education in the multivariable models. If low-income areas with higher proportions of residents with higher education have higher referral proportions, it is certainly plausible that individuals with higher education are also more likely to be referred than their neighbors within the same area. These individuals are also likely to have higher incomes than their neighbors. Some discussion of this issue would be appropriate. In the final sentence of the article, the use of the word “individuals” is unjustified; the findings regard areas rather than individuals.

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

1. P. 8, last 2 lines: I believe that “no association with age” should read “an association with age”
2. P. 11, paragraph 1, line 12: the reference for Dunlop, et al., should be 8, not 7.

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. P. 8, paragraph 1, discussion of Figure 1C should perhaps note that one of the proportions is statistically different from the others.
2. P. 9, Discussion, paragraph 2, line 5: I think that “â€œso far as” would be preferable to “â€œso far that”

Incidentally, the reference to the study on p. 12 as “â€œcross-sectional” may mislead the careless reader into believing that this is a cross-sectional study rather than an ecologic one.
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.