Reviewer's report

Title: Social class gradients in self-reported health in adolescents: validity and magnitude

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Reviewer: Jitse van Dijk

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Social class gradients in self-reported health in adolescents: validity and magnitude

The first part of the research question posed by the authors is so far undecided; every researcher in the field of socioeconomic health differences in adolescents has problems to operationalise socioeconomic status (occupational status of father, mother, or highest; educational status of father, mother or highest; or type of school the adolescent is visiting). To complicate things more, an adolescent’s socioeconomic status is age-dependent. Regarding the adolescent’s answers on the occupational status and the educational status it is unclear whether the answer reflects reality. From this perspective the manuscript may be very welcomed.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached. For example, additional necessary experiments or controls, statistical mistakes, errors in interpretation.

Title

The main research question, and the larger part of the manuscript, is focused on the validity of measuring occupational social class and family level of education reported by adolescents aged 12 to 18. The title is more focusing on the second research question, which has in the manuscript a less central position. I would suggest bringing the title in line with the main message of the manuscript.

Sample

It remains unclear who collected the data: the teacher or the researcher? And in case of the researcher, was this done in absence of the teacher?

Results

Authors state, that the response rate among the adolescents is 82%. Does this mean that 18% from the present adolescents refused to participate, or does this mean that 18% from the registered adolescents were absent from school on the day of the data collection? Do the non-responders differ from the responders?

About the response rate of the adolescents and parents (number of parents not
reached after 5 phone calls & parents refusing to participate in the study) we are not informed. Do the non-responders differ from the responders?

- Minor Essential Revisions
The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

Measures
Was the categorization of the occupation as filled in by the adolescent into the OSC done by the researcher or by someone else?

Figure 1
Figure 1 gives information about Fathers OSC and Mother’s LE. In this figure preferably the information should be added about Father’s LE and Mother’s OSC.

- Discretionary Revisions
These are recommendations for improvement which the author can choose to ignore. For example clarifications, data that would be useful but not essential.

Measures
Error in the use of brackets in the description of family type.
Behind ‘National Spanish Classification of Occupations’ should be inserted ‘(OSC)’
Family LE should be changed into Family Level of Education (LE).

Table 1
Line 5&6 (number of persons in the household): ‘≤ 5’ and ‘> de 5’ is used. The meaning of ‘a’ and ‘de’ is unclear.

Advice
- Accept after minor essential revisions (which the authors can be trusted to make)

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 about Competing interests
I declare that I have no competing interests