Reviewer’s report

Title: Type 2 diabetes attributed to lower educational levels in Sweden: A burden of disease study

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Reviewer: Marc Fleurbaey

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Report for PHM on "Type 2 diabetes attributed to lower educational levels in Sweden: A burden of disease study"

The authors advocate incorporating socioeconomic status (income, education, or similar variables) into the global burden of disease studies, and take as an example the impact of low status in Sweden on the healthy years lost to type 2 diabetes. The general thesis of the paper is convincing, even if it is not totally obvious to see how an example proves the idea to be feasible worldwide.

The paper is overall well written. I have rather minor comments.

I couldn't understand the PAF formula on p. 9. Please explain better. In particular, explain the expression RR-1. The formula should actually be derived, not just explained.

The young people should be distributed among various levels of education according to reasonable expectations of their final level of education. It is absurd to count them all as uneducated and let their mere presence inflate the burden of disease artificially.

I am skeptical about the CRA methodology that pools countries and age groups in order to estimate the link between risk factor and disease. The results are then impossible to use for national policy purposes. A policy raising education levels in Sweden will have an impact that is specific to Sweden and cannot be estimated from international data. The authors do acknowledge this problem, in particular because type 2 diabetes is likely to occur more in educated subgroups in low-income countries. They recommend using estimates for similarly developed countries. But it seems that policy relevance is maximal if local estimates (country, relevant subpopulation by age and location) are used. What the authors could do here is compare worldwide metaestimates with local estimates that are specific to Sweden (they quote one crude study) or neighboring countries.

Typos :

p.9 : 2.74 should be 1.31 on the next to last line.

write "therefore" rather than "therefor" (two occurrences)

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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