Reviewer's report

Title: Spousal diabetes as a diabetes risk factor: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 1 Date: 11 October 2013

Reviewer: Solveig Cunningham

Reviewer's report:

This report presents a systematic review and meta analysis to understand the clustering of diabetes within couples. The study was carefully designed and described. The limitations of the study come largely from the limitations of the literature it is summarizing.

1. The point system is quite arbitrary and it’s unclear to me that this is useful. For example, a study controlling for age and SES has equal points as a study that used GTT. Is this reasonable? Hard to tell. May be better to focus on assessment on multiple dimensions, eg. 1) satisfactory control variables 2) satisfactory diabetes assessment, etc.

2. More clarity is needed on the exclusion of studies with only ethnic groups. Provide explanations for why we could expect the associations to be different between groups.

3. Provide a bit more interpretation of some of the considerations in shared risks – what variables should future studies consider that may increase the shared risk? Along the same lines, explain the implications of duration of partnership and age – how are these factors likely to shape shared risks?

4. Be sure to distinguish between risk of bias and risk of noise – it is bias that we should worry about more and it’s important to distinguish the two.

5. Were weights applied so that the big study (66,130) did not dominate the results?

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests