Reviewer's report

Title: Marital status and ischaemic heart disease incidence and mortality in women: a prospective study

Version: 1 Date: 29 January 2014

Reviewer: Michael Murphy

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Discretionary Revisions

1. My only minor points are the married/unmarried nomenclature is becoming outdated - “married” here includes cohabiting, whereas “unmarried” includes married but separated women (e.g. separated is not included as a group in the Abstract Methods section). Since cohabitation is going to become more important in future, switching to “partnered”/ “unpartnered” might be sensible.

2. A potential mechanism not mentioned for advantage among partnered women is that they tend to have higher standards of living than unpartnered women (in part because of economies of scale in living expenses).

3. Does “living alone” (Line 2 p 5) refer to living arrangements or partnership status?

While not new, the research question is addressed with a larger sample size than hitherto permitting much clearer and precise conclusions to be drawn especially in relation to differences in incidence & mortality.

The method, Cox regression, is appropriate and well described, and sufficient details are provided about the models fitted.

The data are from a large well-organised longitudinal study and appropriate controls are used.

The manuscript adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

The discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data.

The title and abstract accurately convey what has been found.

The writing is clear and well-structured.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests