Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Self-rated literacy level does not explain educational differences in health and disease

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 15 December 2013

**Reviewer:** Herman Van Oyen

**Reviewer’s report:**

1. It may be useful for the reader if you would presented the study objective in a conceptual graph.

2. Literacy is used as a proxy for health literacy. This should be explained to a greater extend in the introduction. Why did the authors expect that a measure of reading skill is sufficient to investigate the role of health literacy with respect to the SES inequalities in health.

3. Abstract
   The conclusion focus on instrument development. This does not have a link to the results description in the abstract.

4. Educational attainment: please refer to the ISCED classification.

5. The statistical analysis is correct as the measures of effect the OR can directly be understood. However, the authors may have had considered other methods such as structural equation models. Please consider this remark in the reply to the reviewers.

6. In the discussion and conclusion, the need for objective measures to estimate the individuals’ health literacy skills is stated, given the fact that the proxy used (reading skills) is insufficient to investigate the role of health literacy in relation to health inequalities. Other currently available instruments (REALM, NVS) are critiqued to be measures of functional skills only. I suggest the authors are somewhat more specific and suggest some other criteria/ domains a health literacy instrument should cover.

8. Titles of tables should be informative. So reference should be made to the time, place, survey (and age range of participants as a subsample of the survey is used)

**Minor comment:**

King’s College London, London, The Netherlands => King’ College London, London, UK

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.