Reviewer’s report

Title: Self-reported data in environmental health studies: Mail vs. Web-based surveys

Version: 0 Date: 03 Sep 2019

Reviewer: Jeanette Ziegenfuss

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript describes an observational survey study that employed a sequential mixed-mode survey (web and paper). The authors report on overall proportion that choose to complete in each mode and the impact of reminder letters on mode choice. They compare self-reported socio-demographic characteristics, health symptoms and attitudes by completion mode. While the questions being asked are important, the study design is weak and there are some fundamental concepts that are not called out in the manuscript that are important to consider as context for the findings, specifically:

1. The authors do not distinguish simultaneous vs. sequential mixed-mode designs

2. The authors do not attempt to disentangle, or at least call out the difference of, selection effect into mode (e.g., mode preference) from potential measurement effect of that mode

3. It is not clear if the follow-up reminders included an additional copy of the paper survey or not. If not, it is not surprising that more people completed via Web at this point as they may no longer have had the paper survey. This follow-up could be construed as web only.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?  
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?  
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English  
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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