Reviewer's report

Title: Questionnaire development for the Lolland-Falster Health Study, Denmark: an iterative and incremental process

Version: 0 Date: 21 May 2019

Reviewer: Jennifer Mindell

Reviewer's report:

I was pleased to be invited to review this article as it resonated so much with my personal experience of running a large health examination survey.

The manuscript started well but rather lost its way.

I love the second paragraph of the introduction. This is so true, as is the issue of trade-offs in 'Length' in Table 2.

The abstract and the main text were not describing the same work - or at least, not the same emphasis. Usually when that happens, I advise the abstract is rewritten. In this case, I feel the abstract is correct and the main text needs to be rewritten to conform better with what the abstract was promising.

What is of great interest, and could be very useful learning for other, less experienced researchers or those commissioning or running surveys, is much more detail on the negotiations, discussions / trade-offs between breadth and depth, prioritisation of topics, burden for survey participants, and so on. However, the discussion barely touches on this. Most of the discussion is lessons learned about broader aspects of questionnaire administration.

The paragraph lines 8-21 on p14 seems to me to be the meat of the paper but it needs more detail in the main text and then the discussions.

Unfortunately, the rest of the paper is statements of the obvious. It could be shortened and sent to Int J Epidemiol as a Data Resource paper but does not really belong in this journal.

NB Using different questionnaire modules for different age-groups or routing questions by responses to initial 'screening' questions is nothing new. We have been doing that for almost 30 years in our survey.
Minor points:

p4 line 8 replace 'both' with 'each of'

line 40 delete 'of'; is 'due to' correct? or is the higher expenditure a sign on the higher deprivation score?

line 50: 'it took offset; means nothing in English. Please rephrase. I have no idea what you are trying to say.

p5 line 16 'those responsible'

line 25 'two to three'

Table 2 Validity - was one of the reasons to improve the validity of the data?

p9 line 4 'retained' I assume, not 'retrained'?

line 28 'add comma after 'six'

p14 line 21 'from the time the subprojects'

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.

Yes

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript
Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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