Reviewer’s report

Title: How Participants Report Their Health Status: Cognitive Interviews of Self-Rated Health Across Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Age, and Educational Attainment

Version: 0 Date: 19 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Roya Sherafat

Reviewer's report:

Current manuscript describes the work undertaken to understand the health factors and the process participants take in order to respond to Self-Rated Health surveys. This qualitative research compares the response processes across different sex, ethnicity and educational attainment groups and can be used as a preliminary model to understand survey results in healthcare settings.

I have a couple of suggestions in order to better understand implications of current research findings and understanding next steps:

1) The first question that the authors may consider to answer in their discussion section is threats to validity of findings in terms of confoundings such as occupations (noticing that significant ethnic differences in physical functioning, OR age group difference for mental health), access to care (Medicare vs. commercial insurance with or without coverage for certain services that might prompt a response for those types of health factors). How do the authors envision generalizability of the findings and application of current results in research across States and by regions?

2) What will be the implications of the study findings in interpreting and understanding SRH results? How the policy makers or public health researchers could be assisted and/or cautioned by these findings in terms of understanding and using SRH in surveys such as NHIS?

3) If possible I would suggest that the authors also provide a brief description of non-responders and whether there was a certain patterns in health condition or other general demographic factors emerge?

4) Finally, I feel a review by an expert qualitative researcher would be appropriate to evaluate the methods used in this study and appropriateness of inferences made.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

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

Yes

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.

I recommend additional statistical review

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

Acceptable

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