Reviewer’s report

Title: "Everything else comes first": A mixed-methods analysis of barriers to health behaviors among military spouses

Version: 0 Date: 24 Jul 2018

Reviewer: Kenneth Allison

Reviewer's report:

This paper examines the important issue of the health-related behaviors, and barriers to these, among military spouses. Based on a mixed methods approach, the study provides insights into the health practices of female spouses in relation to their family life situations and challenges. Many of the barriers study participants mention relate to the unique context of their lives - the uncertainty, frequent moves, financial limitations (especially among enlisted families), and hierarchical structures and social norms affecting interactions between ranks. The authors have provided important findings to contribute to scientific knowledge on this topic, as well as an evidence-informed discussion of the implications for policy and practice. For example, the issue of control is central to understanding the distinction between those factors which military spouses can address themselves, and those which are a function of social and structural factors which are not modifiable. Yet the authors provide some concrete ways that the health-related behaviors of military spouses and their families can be improved. The paper is well-written and clear and the authors present a balanced approach to discussing the findings as well as limitations of the study.

One important finding presented in the paper, the perspective of "enlisted" spouses that interactions and activities with spouses of higher ranking servicemen are strained or impossible, could be elaborated on in the discussion section. As well, the authors may want to highlight the importance of the study more in the conclusion section in terms of its contribution to further understanding the unique life situations and challenges of military spouses in relation to their health and the health of their families.

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

Yes

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 am able to assess the statistics

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

Acceptable

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