Reviewer’s report

Title: Do trajectories of economic, work- and health-related disadvantages explain child welfare clients’ increased mortality risk? A prospective cohort study

Version: 0 Date: 22 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Tiina ristikari

Reviewer’s report:

Article Do trajectories of economic, work- and health-related disadvantages explain child welfare clients' increased mortality risk? A prospective cohort study, is a well-designed, analyzed and written paper, that offers new important insights in to the potential causal mechanisms behind the increased mortality among persons with out of home care experience.

I recommend publishing the paper with few minor editions:

1. The paper has 3 study populations: OHC, no OHC and investigation into need to OHC. If possible, it would be a good idea to have a table that describes the characteristics of these groups, in particular family background (parental education, poverty, mental health) and individual characteristics prior to transitions (mental health, school performance) and age of placement for those placed. The authors argue that OHC population and investigated group are very similar in background, so it would be nice, if possible to see some basic descriptives on this.

2. The authors could describe in more detail why they chose this mortality follow-up as compared to the other paper they compare their findings with.

3. In the discussion section the authors go on quite long about the question of ethnicity and OHC. This could be shortened. It is obvious that in order to study questions of mortality, one has to use data from 1950s or so, and the authors have nicely described the differences in the OHC population of that time and today.

4. The authors mention very shortly that if they had more information about the transition period they might be able to explain larger part of the increased mortality. The main weakness here is the lack of register information about outpatient treatment, which would be important when studying mental health. The authors could state this a bit more clearly. This is one of the main weaknesses of the data.

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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