Reviewer’s report

Title: Inequality in oral health related to early- and later-life socioeconomic position (SEP): a study of elderly in Norway and Sweden

Version: 1 Date: 22 October 2014

Reviewer: Marco Peres

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions
This is an interesting manuscript addressing a relevant and timely issue. The manuscript is well written and the Introduction section clearly presents the research question and objectives. However, I think the authors should provide in the Introduction section the plausibility of the association between early life and oral health outcomes later on.

The main of shortcoming of the manuscript is the very short period of follow up (2007-2012) and, mainly, the use of participant’s education (higher education versus lower education) as a proxy for socioeconomic environment in early life. Education is the most stable socioeconomic position in the life span reflecting adulthood circumstances. Usually parents’ education is used as a proxy for early life socioeconomic environment. Could the authors justify this option or provide a reference to support it?

Some methodological aspects of the study should be clarified.
Why did the authors consider marital status as a SEP variable?
How the sample was selected?
Most of the variables used are binary regardless the use of large sample size; this may result in loss of information. Should you justify the use of such categorisation?
Could you provide reliability values of self-reported number of teeth for Swedish participants?
All methodological concerns aforementioned should be discussed in depth

Minor revisions
Finally, I would suggest
i) to shorten the results section
ii) refrain from using 95% CI and p values; they are in the tables
iii) refrain repeating what the readers can see in the tables

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests