Reviewer’s report

Title: Concepts of social epidemiology in health services research

Version: 2
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Reviewer: Robert Levine

Reviewer’s report:

1. Major Compulsory Revision

The author addresses an important problem of interest to a broad biomedical audience. Key terms and concepts are concisely summarized. Nonetheless, the discussion would benefit from more debate. Direct equation of poverty and other social disadvantages with poor outcomes risks a scientific literature awash in negative social stereotypes. In fact, there is evidence that poor health does not inevitably occur in settings where measures of personal resources and social context might predict otherwise. Non-social scientists like the present reader would be very interested to know how social theory accounts for this. Perhaps concepts such as those introduced by other sociologists (e.g., Pearce, Lisa D. 2002. “Integrating survey and ethnographic methods for systematic anomalous case analysis.” Sociological Methodology 32(1):103-132.) belong in the discussion. Perhaps it would be useful to discuss inter-relationships between social theorists and the work of economists such as Amartya Sen. Perhaps the author can find other examples. As it stands, however, the account of social theory seems oversimplified.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.