Reviewer's report

Title: Concepts of social epidemiology in health services research

Version: 3  Date: 1 April 2015

Reviewer: Peter Goldblatt

Reviewer's report:

1) The paper is considerably improved and could now be published subject to a few revisions to the wording - some of which are small but substantive while most are simply wrong use of terms in English.

Major revisions

2) On page 4, line 6 it is an exaggeration to say most social epidemiologists base their indicators on Weberian class. Those that use analytical concepts of social class take a variety of viewpoints, such as the Marxist and Weberian traditions or later formulations. However, very many use more empirical traditions such as a socio-economic status approach, which simply notes the correlation of income, education and wealth with social outcomes without necessarily implying a particular theory of social structure. The Registrar General's social class, used by English epidemiologists through most of the 20th Century, is a striking example of the empirical approach.

Minor essential revisions

3) In the abstract on page 2, I noted the following English language issues:

   Line 2 "social epidemiology proposes" should probably be "social epidemiologists aim"

   Line 4 "important concepts" should be "some important concepts". As indicated in my earlier review, the paper is not a comprehensive list of all that is important.

   Line 6 " concepts of social epidemiology" should be "concepts used in social epidemiology"

   Line 8 "social inequality indicators" should be "factors associated with inequality"

   Line 14 the psychosocial work environment also impacts on the health of the workforce

4) In the background, in line 8 on page 3, "important concepts" should again be "some important concepts"

5) In the Discussion:

   Line 11, page 4 - the author should check that all the references from 6 to 17 relate to the link between social stratification and health. Some are about social
integration and others about social capital.

Line 1, page 7 "fundamental causes" should be "fundamental causes of disease" as in the reference cited

6) Under Relevance for Health Services Research

Line 5 on page 8 - after "interaction" add "and their immediate effects, such as differences in waiting times across the patient pathway"

Line 23 on page 8 - "it is promising for health services research to analyze" should be "a promising avenue for health services research to analyze is"

Line 2 on page 10 - the implication of Siegrist's work is that medical support staff (such as nurses, paramedics and auxiliaries) would be expected to suffer even higher levels of stress than clinicians.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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