Reviewer’s report

Title: The Influence of Education on Health: An Empirical Assessment of OECD Countries for the period 1995-2015

Version: 0 Date: 01 Dec 2019

Reviewer: Herman Van Oyen

Reviewer's report:

I thank the Editors and the authors for the opportunity to review this manuscript. The manuscript of the article is the fact that many indicators are used. On the other hand, the statistical analysis is limited.

My remarks are minor:

1.

* The title of the manuscript should be informative related to period considered and geographical coverage. The same info should also be in the abstract

* The manuscript should follow the guidelines for a research paper with the headings as given in the guidelines.

* The reference both in the text as in the list should follow the journal requirements

* Some parts of the text, especially the current background and theoretical foundations could be more concise.

* Table 1.

  o Tertiary School Life Expectancy is a number of years and not a %

  o For both the enrollment as for the 3 levels of Education (below secondary, secondary and tertiary, the % sign is used. The 3 levels of education are correctly a proportion and the sum of the 3 should be be one. This is not the case for the enrollment rate =&gt; but is expressed per 100. Please indicate it as such, as a reader could be confused as e.g. the enrollment rate goes above 100 (see figure 2 and 4, …)

* Interpretation of the figures are given in italic, which is not the journal style and sometimes this text comes in repetition
* A reader should be able to read and interpret any figure without reading the text. Most of the comments are for different figures and are not always repeated

- Figure 1: Title: which period is covered? Estimates are averages =\&gt; weighted averages? Which countries are involved? Deaths from cancer and infant mortality are not counted but rates, respectively per 100000 and 1000; the axis titles should also indicate that they represent rates. As in the two graphs, life expectancy and infant mortality are together and deaths of cancer and PYYL are together, this should also be in the title.

- Figure 2: see remarks above related to title. Y-axis: meaning of "value" should be defined but as it is both an enrollement rate and a proportion which do not have the same meaning this need to be clarified in a legend.

It is unexpected that the Average enrollment rate of secondary and primary have values above 100, given they are a %?

- Figure 5: Average enrollmen =\&gt; ??? write in full. Or use another abbreviation. The figures in the bubbles are the vaccination rate and this be expressed to the reader

I would therefore suggest that all figures are reviewed in line of these comments

* A supplementary table should be provided to indicate which countries are involved and which countries are involved in each of the analysis/indicator/period.

2.

In the background, second paragraphs several arguments are given to illustrate the complexity of the relationship. Related to the reference of Freedman & Martin, 1999; I would suggest the reference of Pamuk E.K., 1988 which indicated the importance of the relative position compared to an absolute labeling of socio-economic position (Pamuk et al. Social class inequality in infant mortality in England and Wales, 1921-1980; Eur J Popul 4:1-21, 1988), which was then later presented as the Kunst-Mackenbach relative index of inequality (Mackenbach, Johan; Anton Kunst (1997). "Measuring the magnitude of socio-economic inequalities in health: An overview of available measures illustrated with two examples from Europe". Social Science & Medicine. 44 (6): 757-771.).

Another argument not mentioned is the fact if the inequality is expressed a relative or an absolute difference; see Renard F et al. Monitoring health inequalities when the socio-economic composition changes: are the slope and relative indices of inequality appropriate? Results of a simulation study. BMC Public Health. 2019 May 30;19(1):662

3.
The methods section is very concise. As average are used the authors should add information related e.g. if weights to account for population sizes of the countries have been used and if not, why not.

4.

In the limitation or in the paragraph on future research some more attention should be given to the potential of the use of statistical modelling such as meta-regression approaches, see e.g.


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