Reviewer's report

Title: Health, health behaviors, and health dissimilarities predict divorce: Results from the HUNT study

Version: 2 Date: 23 January 2015

Reviewer: Kurt Hahlweg

Reviewer's report:

Health, health behaviors, and health dissimilarities predict divorce: Results from the HUNT study

The current study investigated whether a set of health variables (subjective health, obesity, heavy drinking, mental distress, lack of exercise, smoking) are possible predictors of marital dissolution and divorce. These variables were analyzed by survival analysis (Cox proportional hazard models) at the individual and dyadic level, estimating the effect of similarity in these factors.

The study has several (amazing) strengths:
1. Sample size of 19,827 couples
2. Prospective data from a general population study, with self-reported data from both spouses.
3. Objective data on marriage and marital dissolution from governmental registries with no missing values/attrition.
4. A follow-up of 15.5 years on marital dissolution.
5. Methodological rigor, e.g. adjusting for age, income, education, and length of the marriage.
6. High ethical standard in the way questionnaire data and registry data were matched.

Limitations:
1. The sample is from a rural area in Norway taking part in the Nord-Trøndelag Health Study (HUNT) between 1984 and 1986. Generalizability to couples from larger cities is questionable.
2. No data on marital satisfaction (as mentioned by the authors in the discussion).

The strengths of the study outweigh it’s limitations by far.

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